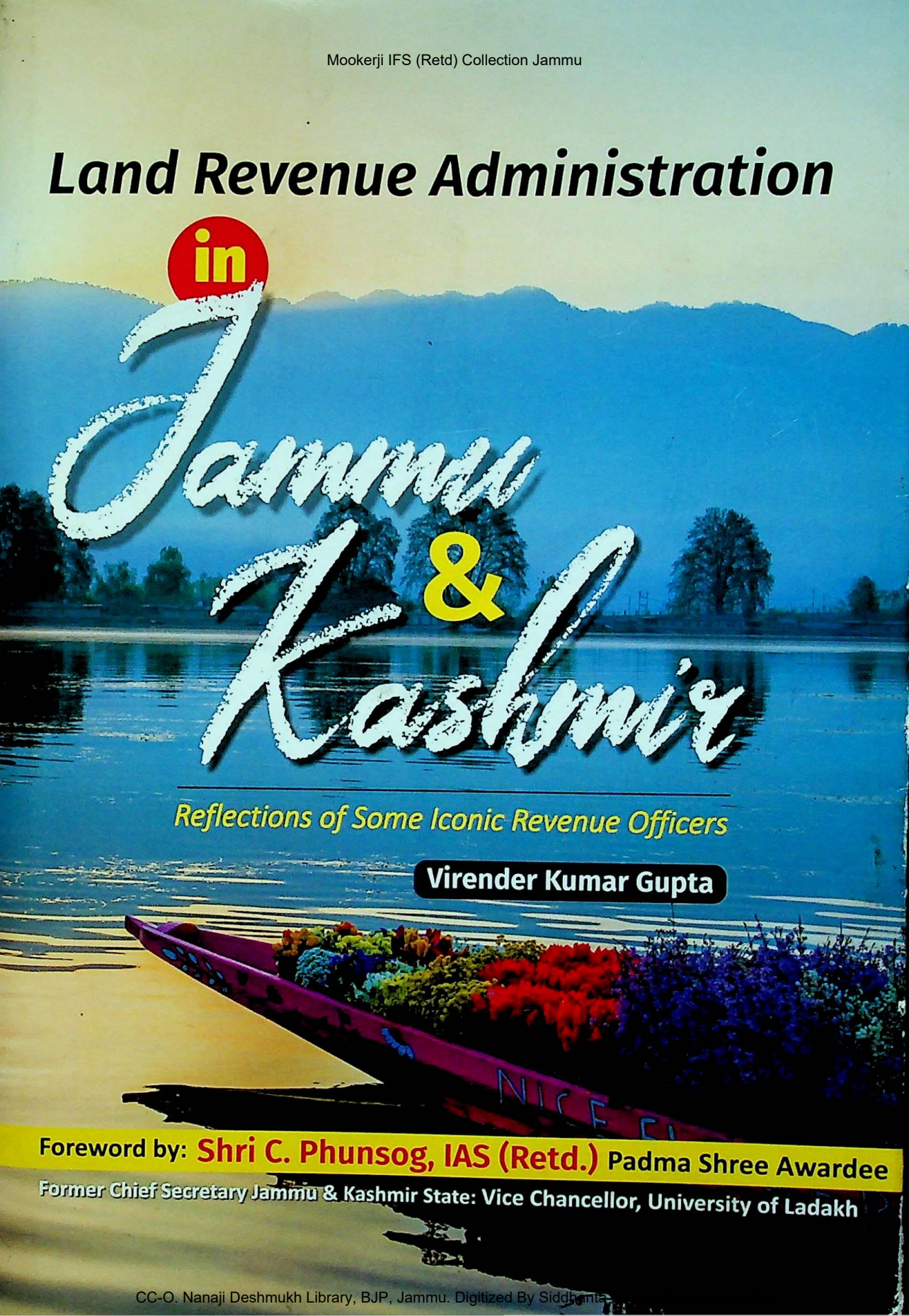
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Land Revenue Administration in Jammu & Kashmir



Reflections of Some Iconic Revenue Officers

Virender Kumar Gupta

Foreword by: Shri C. Phunsog, IAS (Retd.) Padma Shree Awardee

Former Chief Secretary Jammu & Kashmir State: Vice Chancellor, University of Ladakh

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About the book...

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This book mainly deals with the working of Revenue Department in the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State (now UT). The book delves into the importance and history of various developments during the long journey of more than one and a half-century. It also depicts very beautifully a comparison of working in the Department during the bygone era as well as the present times, by way of narrating personal experiences and reflections of certain iconic ex-Revenue Officers including those of the author himself. Additionally, through the book an attempt has been made to highlight various aspects concerning the Department as also the traditional role of Revenue Officers. Other features which have been tried to be projected are, one that prestige and importance which the Department and its Officers used to command in times of yore have, of late, started diminishing; two that personal contact and rapport which Revenue Officers used to have, in the past with people in general and the rural masses in particular, seem to have taken a back seat.

In the chapter titled 'The Conclusion', besides venturing to point out some causes of concern, certain valuable suggestions do emphasise the fact that there is need of making sincere and concerted efforts in the direction of overall improvement in the working of the Revenue Department, lest it may be too late.

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(Senior Revenue Officer – Retd.)

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Reflections of Some Iconic Revenue Officers

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"This book is dedicated to all those unsung iconic officers who, despite heavy odds, constraints and compulsions, worked selflessly for keeping up highly acclaimed traditions of Revenue Department in the State of Jammu and Kashmir"

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FOREWORD

This book in the main is the tribute of a Revenue Officer to twenty trend-setters of modern administration of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir. The author has chosen to call six most prominent of them as the **'bouquet'** of Land Revenue Administration in Jammu and Kashmir. I am conscious that I may not be the best person to write a foreword for this book even though I have known most of the twenty 'trend-setters' directly or indirectly – having had the opportunity of working as subordinate to two of them in the State's administrative hierarchy and a colleague of most of them in the Secretariat or the field administration of Jammu and Kashmir State. I have also had the fortune of having a couple of them as my direct subordinate in the field Revenue administration in Kashmir. On the other hand, I know that the author is one of the best persons to write a book of this nature as not only had he started his professional career as a Revenue functionary at a low level, but also managed to rise to the highest of echelons of the State bureaucracy, by dint of his professional acumen, by the time he retired on superannuation after forty years of Government service.

As we know, the 'agricultural revolution' in mankind's history popularly known as 'Neolithic Demographic Transition', that took place simultaneously in several parts of the world about twelve thousand years ago, had facilitated a marked shift in the human situation- from 'hunting-gathering' to 'agriculture'. This had then served as a trigger for development of human civilizations - the most important single step since the appearance of human species on earth in Africa two million years ago. When tillage began, on settling down of nomadic tribes, radical changes in other areas like art, science, and industry followed making farmers the harbinger of civilizations. Indus Valley in India was one of the regions that co-hosted the agricultural revolution. Then, as civilizations advanced, Land Revenue had become the principal source of financing the expenditures on maintaining kingdoms as also on advancing societies in various fields through them. Undoubtedly, tax on land by whatever nomenclature it might have been called during different periods in

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history, had played the key role in substantially filling coffers of the ruling powers. In the Indian subcontinent, land tax commonly known as 'Land Revenue' formed, until a few decades ago, bulk of the incomes of Governments of the times. As a matter of fact, Land Revenue has been considered, from very ancient times, as the principal constituent of a sovereign's resources. The administration of a Kingdom or Empire depended heavily on collection of Land Revenue and the procedures and manner of its collection. In other words, from times immemorial and till very recently, governance centred round land, Land Revenue and Land Revenue administration.

In India, as in many other countries, the Revenue Department has in the past been the backbone of administration in the States and to some extent continues to be so even now. Accordingly, members of the civil services in India have had to occupy several key positions in the Revenue hierarchy in the State Secretariat as well as field administration, such as, the positions of Financial Commissioner (Revenue), Divisional Commissioner, District Collector/Deputy Commissioner/District Magistrate, Sub-divisional Officer/Magistrate etc. As for the District Administration in India, there is evidence that even during the Mouryan era, there existed a system that loosely resembled the present-day District Collectorate. In view of the slow and difficult means of communication available those days, it was quite difficult to govern vast empires like the Mauryan Empire. Therefore, with a view to having effective control, the country was divided into smaller and convenient administrative units and placed in the charge of the King's representative called the Rajjukkara. Although the basic function of the Rajjukkara was collecting Land Revenue - the principal component of the State resources- he also exercised Judicial powers besides being charged with the responsibility of promoting trade, commerce and industry, as well as administering the social services and public works sectors, as in the case of District Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner of the present day.

Then, during the Mughal rule, efforts were made to overhaul and revamp the system of administration by dividing the empire into what was called Subas, Sarkars and Parganas. The Subas were headed by a Governor, but the Sarkars, roughly corresponding to the present Districts, were headed by a Foujdar (a Military Commander) equivalent of the present day District Magistrate and District Superintendent of Police rolled into one. For the purpose of Revenue collection in the Sarkar, by far the most important component of the kingdom's resources, Amalguzar or Afsar-e-Mal (Revenue Officer) of the Sarkar reported to authorities in the

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Suba directly. This, in a manner of speaking, was a measure of the importance of Land Revenue to the Rulers. Then, even though some measures introduced by Sher Shah Suri and Raja Todar Mal (during Akbar's Rule) had greatly improved the Land Revenue system and the Revenue collection by the middle of the 16th century, the Empire witnessed not only increasingly defiant regional Subas but also rapidly depleting treasury resources, during the last days of the Mughal Empire, due to reasons among others the decline in efficiency of the Revenue administration.

The present District administration in the country is looked upon by many as a legacy of the British rule in India. The year 1765 is being seen as a watershed in the history of Land Revenue administration in India. With the acquisition of the Diwanee rights of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the East India Company had virtually gradually established its supremacy in the eastern part of the Mughal Empire. The 'Farman' granting Diwanee was tantamount to a free gift to the Company for life. The highlights of the Farman included among others realisation of Revenues with a significant stipulation to maintain troops for the Company on the pretext of securing its Revenues. The result was that the Company had gradually become the de facto Ruler of a region leaving only formal administration with the native Ruler of the region. The Company, and later British India, experimented with various changes for necessary improvements. Thus, the present Indian system of Revenue administration is the result of a long journey of improvements of spanning over two and a half centuries.

In a State or Union Territory of the country, the branch of administration dealing with land, Land Revenue and Land Revenue administration has come to be known as the Revenue Department. The Department has got a well-knit and well-defined hierarchy starting from the Village Chowkidar at the bottom to the Revenue Minister (Musheer-e-Mal) at the top. The functions of the Department are regulated by hordes of Laws, Rules and Regulations issued from time to time. In a manner of speaking, the Revenue Department has the pride of place in the State administration by virtue of its being the oldest arm of governance. That is why old stalwarts, like the twenty trend-setters forming the subject matter of this book, are still adored and remembered by the people of Jammu and Kashmir across the board. For example, Sir Walter R. Lawrence, the English officer who had undertaken 'Land Settlement' in Kashmir in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is still fondly remembered by the Kashmiri as 'Lawrence Sahab'. The challenge for the Revenue Officers of today is to maintain the image of the Revenue Department as the backbone of a State's administration, as in the past.

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Through the medium of this book, the author has made a commendable effort at highlighting various aspects of a State Revenue Department's working as well as the crucial role of Revenue Officers in governance. To the best of my knowledge, this compilation is the first such attempt at bringing facts, hitherto unknown to the common man about the Revenue Department of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State and its iconic officers as trend-setters, at one place. Write-ups in the two parts titled, **'The Bouquet'** and **'The Trend Setters'** make not only interesting but enlightening reading wherein experiences and public reputations of twenty iconic Revenue Officers of enviable social standing, during their long careers as Revenue Officers, have been nicely and intelligibly summed up. Part titled, **'Tales and Anecdotes'** is so immensely informative as to stand all manner of readers in good stead. The chapter titled, **'Conclusion'** should not only inform readers, particularly those engaged in the running of the Revenue hierarchy at different levels, adequately but also rouse curiosity of readers about the State's modern field administration in general. 'Appendices' containing Laws and Rules such as the Land Revenue and the Land Settlement Acts provide also information on rare books that serve as a pool of references to which young Revenue Officials, particularly those who are trainees or still in the process of learning on-job, can have ready access. This category of readers should also find in the book certain invaluable pieces of advice to follow in the process of their maturing as Revenue Officers.

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Dated : January 2, 2021

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PREFACE

There were times when an officer or official who joined Revenue Department, at whatever level, would normally retire (may be at a higher assignment) from the same Department. In olden times, even the Deputy Commissioners and Divisional Commissioners would be posted from amongst the officers who had risen from the Departmental cadre itself. So, there was a sort of continuity, and that way working procedures and principles would pass on from official generation to generation in a systematic manner. But with the changed scenario as of today, it has been felt that there is a big gap in following the procedures and principles in effective performance of the duly assigned functions at various levels of officers and officials of the Department and of course, sufferer is the general public.

Here it may be pertinent to share a strong feeling that public has, somehow, started losing faith in administration, and of course, that is definitely a dangerous trend. Again, it may not be out of context to mention a real story as under;

"In mid-nineties of the past century, I was posted as Director Rural Development Department Jammu, when one day one of my old colleagues Shri Rattan Chand Khajuria, (he has since left for his heavenly abode) requested to take him along whenever I visit R. S. Pura. Earlier, (year 1980-83) when I was posted as Tehsildar R. S. Pura, Shri Khajuria was posted as Naib Tehsildar there. Since he was shortly due to retire (as Tehsildar Jammu), he had to get some Service book entries verified from Tehsil office R. S. Pura for completion of his pension documents. So, next time when I visited R. S. Pura, Shri Khajuria accompanied me. It so happened that after finishing my official work, I also went to Tehsil office. While Khajuria got his paper-work done, I sat with the then Tehsildar and had chat on general issues. En route our back journey, Khajuria asked me if I had noted something during my stay in Tehsil office premises (as I vividly remember we were there for more than an hour). I replied that nothing special did I notice. Then he added that when we were posted there, hordes of people were visiting Tehsil office for getting their issues

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sorted out, but that day there was hardly any one and the officers were almost free to talk to us. He further added that during our times, we would hardly get free time, and would always remain busy in dealing with various types of written or oral grievances of the people, especially during office hours. Did it mean that all the issues of people have got settled now and they have no problems? I thought over his proposition for a moment and then said that yes, his observation to the extent that there were very few people in Tehsil premises that day was correct, but it did not mean that people had no issues or grievances. I added, that with the set up our society was having, problems and issues never end, but the fact of the matter was that administration in general seemed to have become un-responsive to the genuine problems of the people. It had been a common practice with officers to avoid public on one pretext or the other. Touring by officers, particularly in far flung or remote areas, was almost negligible, and consequently the people had almost lost confidence in administration. He agreed with me and matter ended there."

The story is not an isolated piece of a tale, but such stories do come under discussion quite often, whenever two or more ex- Revenue Officers happen to meet whether in a social gathering or elsewhere; they do discuss varied experiences on account of their personal visits to any Revenue Department office or feedback they otherwise receive from general public. More details on the topic are available in the narratives based on individual experiences of certain iconic officers, in later part of the book.

In 2011 the Government of India, sanctioned a Central University for Jammu; of which, Dr Sudhir S Bloeria a retired I.A.S. Officer of J and K cadre (former Chief Secretary J and K) was appointed as the founder Vice Chancellor. Although the State Government had identified around 5000 kanals of land for housing the University, yet demarcation, acquisition and taking over possession of the land was a major task. Dr Bloeria assigned the task to me by appointing as Consultant Land Management on contractual basis; as I had retired from Government service in January 1999. As a passing reference, it would be in place to add here that the task of demarcation, acquisition (where required) and handing over possession to the University in respect of 4880 kanals and 19 marlas (total identified land) of State, Forest, private and evacuees' lands, was completed well within schedule (the last piece of land was got handed over to the University Estates Officer on 31-07-2014); although many other Central Universities, which were established much earlier to the Central University of Jammu, are still struggling for transfer of land in full. This was my last assignment as a Revenue expert. During interaction at various levels including that with local inhabitants, officials and officers of

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Revenue Department right from Patwaris to Financial Commissioner, as a part of follow up; hitches had to be often confronted. The issues which came to be discussed lead to the conclusion that decline in functioning of the Department has to be checked at the level of appropriate authorities in the Government. With this at the back of mind we did discuss on a number of occasions the need to bring out a book on the subject. Last time, it was on a sunny day of summer 2018; we (Dr Bloeria, Shri Ved Parkash Gupta and myself) had gathered at the residence of our colleague Shri Rajinder Singh Parihar, a retired I.A.S. Officer (former Member Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission), when once again many negative aspects concerning Revenue Department came under discussion, and need of bringing out a comprehensive book on the subject was intensely felt. Shri Parihar is one of the iconic ex-Revenue Officer and is presently having health problems. Shri Ved Parkash Gupta is another ex- Revenue Officer with a fine career history. As Dr Bloeria expressed his inability in view of his pre-occupation with other similar projects in hand, I was prompted to take up the job and finally it was on 22nd of March, 2018, it being an auspicious day of Navratras, I started with a few lines of 'Introduction' chapter.

Now, I may relate some facts concerning my early life, which of course, would include brief mention about three places in particular namely, Skardu, Pargwal and Bhimbar, as follows;

I. Skardu. It is part of that tract of Ladakh, which in local language is commonly known as 'Balti' and its natives as 'Balti-pa' (residents of Balti area), but generally it is known as 'Baltistan' - or the place of Baltis. There cannot be any information more authentic than what has been described by Frederic Drew, the famous administrator and writer, in his celebrated book, "The JAMMU AND KASHMIR TERRITORIES - A GEOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT" published in 1875(A.D.). So, it would be appropriate to quote few excerpts from the book as under;

i. **Page 360.** *"Baltistan is composed of enormous mountain-chains, or mass of mountains. Of these, only a study of the map will make clear the direction. As to height; while 18,000 and 20,000 feet is common, there are, in the north-easterly parts, peaks of 25,000 and 26,000 and one above 28,000 feet.*

"By far the most of Skardu plain is uncultivated; it is a waste of sand and stones: there is first the space in flood-time covered by the waters; then over some square miles, is blown sand, hopeless for cultivation; last are the stony tracts belonging to the alluvial fans of streams ..... Cultivation, however, is limited more by the supply of water than by the barrenness of the soil; for

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where irrigation can be applied, very hopeless-looking ground will yield crops. The water of the large rivers is seldom available, but the side streams, coming from high level, can be led over the alluvial plateaus; these, then, make real oases, though of small area, surrounded by the yellow sands; plentiful crops come up, and innumerable fruit-trees flourish in them."

ii. **Page 361-62.** *"Skardu itself is out in the plain, 7440 feet above the sea, just at the foot of one of the two isolated rocks; this, rising to 1000 feet above, overhangs it. Skardu is not a town; it is rather a scattered collection of houses and hamlets; the position of it is on an alluvial plateau, 150 feet above the river, which will therefore be about 7300 feet above sea-level."*

As per **'Settlement Report of Tehsil Skardu'**- 1901 (A.D.), the Tehsil is intersected by three large rivers - the Indus, the Shyok and the Shigar, and comprised 203 villages with cultivated area 43,439 acres of total measured 68,569 acres.

The description of Skardu has, of course, consumed a large space, but it deserved because that happens to be my birth place. In fact, after doing his F.A. from the Prince of Wales College (later named as G.G.M. Science College) Jammu, then affiliated to the University of Punjab, my father got an appointment as Wasalbaqi Nawis - a senior ministerial functionary in Tehsil office - and was posted to Skardu. Although I admit that I have no personal knowledge about that place, because our family left Skardu when I was hardly two years of age, yet whatever little I learnt from my parents in my later life or from other sources, needs be shared with the readers as follows: -

i. People of the area were quite kind hearted and helpful in one's hour of the need.

ii. Climate of the place was quite cold. So much so that as often shared by my late father, during winter season a goat/sheep after slaughter and dressing would be kept hanging in a corner of a room to be consumed for cooking as per requirement for months together.

iii. Fruits of very good quality such as apricot and grapes were locally available in plenty. In the Assessment Report of 1901 (A.D.), while dealing with fruit, it is mentioned as under: -

"First in importance comes the apricot and dried apricots - exported largely to Kashmir and even Punjab. In 1899 the value of produce amounted to Rs 5000/=. ....."

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iv. Jade (locally known as Zehar Mohra) was locally available in the area and people would use the same for converting it into cooking utensils. In my childhood I have seen at our home a complete 'Tea Set' made of Jade (Zehar Mohra). Unfortunately, not knowing value of the same and due to mishandling not a single piece is now available.

v. Shillajeet, a valuable forest product (extracted from high peaks), and used in many ayurvedic medicines, was said to be available with ease there. Good quantity (a tin box having around 400 grams.) of Shillajeet was at our home said to have been brought from Skardu.

II. Pargwal. My family belonged to village Pargwal of old Tehsil Aknoor, and new Tehsil Pargwal itself. I feel the narrative will be incomplete if I fail to tell something about said village (now a town). The town is part of 'Pargwal Island' comprising four Patwar Halqas and twenty-one villages covering a population of 17267 souls. Pargwal is the biggest village of the area having around 750 households with a population of 3944 souls. Although, position has now changed to some extent; earlier the area was cut off from mainland being surrounded by mighty river Chenab and its tributaries. Those old days there was only one route connecting whole of the island. In order to reach any place in the island, one had to travel by Bus up to Jaurian (which earlier was just a small village, but has been now transformed into a town and is headquarter of newly created Tehsil Jourian), located at a distance of around forty kilometres from Jammu. There onwards one had to travel around five kilometres on foot up to 'Indri Pattan', from where one had to cross river Chenab by boat. It will be interesting to know that although during winter months it may be a routine affair, but to cross the river during summer months it used to be a hell of a job. It would take hours together for one side crossing; sometimes there would be only one or at the most two trips during the whole day. After alighting from the boat, one had to again cover on foot a distance of around three kilometres to reach Pargwal with no regular track, but through fields only. That of course was a negative aspect of the area, but once you were there you would feel fresh and fine by finding yourself surrounded by green fields, pollution free air, well-constructed and airy houses along well laid lanes, fruit gardens and so on. Every necessity of life used to be available there as produced in the locality itself. Since my father was in State Government service, we stayed where ever he was posted, but we used to visit our grandparents at Pargwal during summer vacations almost every year. We have heard stories of well-being of the locality, which in short may be

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summarised simply that except salt and kerosene oil, you name anything necessary for a good living and that would be found available there among local products. To cut the long story short, all types of pulses, cereals (including rice, maize, bajra and wheat), spices, sugar cane, cotton, hemp, oil seeds, seasonal fruits and vegetables were locally produced in the area in plenty. Having large areas under green cover, cattle population was also reasonably good; resulting in availability of milk and milk products as well in abundance. Therefore, the whole of the population of the island was well off and a satisfied lot, except for frequent disturbances from across the border, at least for few years after 1947. Entire population of the 'Island' did get uprooted during 1947, 1965 and 1971 disturbances.

III. Bhimbar. A brief mention of harrowing experience of my early childhood at Bhimbar; where my father was then posted as Wasalbaqi Nawis, is also important. Although, I was quite young but in view of the circumstances, I vividly remember at least the incidents of last days of our stay there. Bhimbar had a long history; in good old times Bhimbar itself had been a District. But in any case, it was an important town as also a Tehsil of District Mirpur (both the towns are presently part of POK). In the wake of 'Partition of the Country' among others the town of Bhimbar remained disturbed on account of frequent attacks from intruders from across the border. The intruders would come and return after arson, looting and assault on whosoever came to their grab. On hearing such information people would assemble in groups at select 'Havelis' (a big house) at different locations in the town. At the same time, Tehsil office having security cover of 'Treasury Guard' was considered as the safest place, and therefore, Tehsil officials would generally assemble there on such occasions. In fact, they had shifted their valuables as well there itself. But, as the luck would have been, on the fateful day when there was news of attack of intruders, my father felt a bit feverish and decided not to go to Tehsil office. Instead we moved into an adjoining Haveli, where few families of the locality had already gathered. We spent almost whole night there huddled inside few bed rooms and awake; over hearing from adjoining lanes the harrowing out bursts of the intruders and everybody was frightened. Late after midnight someone informed that a room at the uppermost story of the building had caught fire, therefore, it was suggested to move out of the building. But to the utmost misfortune, it was found that outermost 'Deodi' of the Haveli had also caught fire. Thus, there was much chaos and panic among the inmates. However, God willingly, by that time outside outbursts got started calming down; it was felt that after the night long looting and arson spree the raiders had got tired and would be resting or they had been busy in shifting their loot to

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some safe areas. Therefore, it was considered to be the high time to move out immediately. Accordingly, after deliberations and consultations an evacuation plan was thought of and promptly acted upon. According to the plan few iron rods of window of a room at first floor were hurriedly removed, a wooden plank was put there, one end of which rested on window space created by removal of iron rods and the other end rested on top of an adjoining single-storey house across the lane. This way everybody moved out of the burning house just before dawn, and in group moved towards Tehsil Office. Luckily, we reached Tehsil office without any encounter with any miscreant, although en route few more people joined the group. To our dismay, when we reached Tehsil office, it bore a deserted look with dead bodies scattered all over. It was learnt that with a view to ensure safe play that day the intruders, in the first instance, attacked Tehsil office, eliminated the Treasury Guards and others who so ever came to resist them, looted everything of their interest, before moving to the town. From there, the group which had started swelling by the joining of more people, left to move out of town. It was a frightening and an un-ending journey on foot, sometimes without a single grain for the whole day; which culminated on seventh day when we reached the town of Akhnoor.

It merits a mention here that narration of events, like those mentioned in last few paragraphs, is necessary as such events surely have positive or negative impact on the character or personality of every person, and I must admit that I was no exception. These events have helped in developing my sense of sympathy and attitude of helping others in the times of their sufferings, which of course, is one of the most important qualifications of a successful Revenue Officer.

I had my initial schooling at Ramban, Bhimbar, Udhampur and Akhnoor. It was in the year 1952 when I joined Government Hari Singh High School Jammu wherefrom I passed my Matriculation in the year 1956 and that was the longest period I had spent in one School.

When I passed my 8th standard examination and joined 9th class in Government Hari Singh High School, Jammu, going by the trend of those days, and as per my father's advice, I opted for science (non-medical) subjects. The same subjects were continued when I joined G. G. M. Science College, Jammu. Presumably, in the back of the mind of my father, intention would have been to prepare me for Engineering stream. Incidentally in the year 1958, the State Government started Government Polytechnic at Srinagar. On receiving the information that applications were sought, along with other student colleagues, I also filled up the application form and in due course appeared for the interview held by the

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Public Service Commission as well. It took them few months to finalise the selection process. In the meantime, in order to meet deficiency of trained personnel in Patwari cadre the Government, sanctioned and started two Patwari Training Institutes, one at Jammu and the other at Srinagar. Earlier, for some period, there was no regular training set-up and those desiring to join as Patwari were sent, for on the job training, to Tehsils where Settlement work would be going on, before their regular recruitment in the Department. When the process for recruiting stipendiary Patwari candidates for the first batch in the newly opened Revenue Training Institutes was initiated, on the advice of my father, I also put my application to the Deputy Commissioner Jammu, being the District selection authority. In the first phase the Deputy Commissioner shortlisted the candidates after written as also oral tests and in the second phase we were asked to appear before the Commissioner (later known as Divisional Commissioner) Jammu for interview before finalising the selection. Kanwar Narinder Singh was the Commissioner those days and incidentally my father, late Shri Sain Dass, was working as Head Assistant in his office. At the time of interview, the Commissioner had associated the officer in charge Revenue Training Institute, who in those days was designated as Superintendent. Babu Behari Lal the then Superintendent was a very fine, soft spoken and experienced Revenue Officer, for whom I had great respect all along my life, and I always treated him as my guide, mentor and philosopher so far as my service career was concerned. It was a routine interview and in reply to one of the questions asked by the Commissioner, I mentioned to have appeared in F. Sc. examination, result of which was awaited. It may be in place to point out that most of the candidates appearing for the interview were Matriculates; even some of them were middle pass only, as at that time the prescribed qualification was Middle pass. At that juncture, an official of the Commissioner's office, who was assisting him in conduct of interview, informed the Commissioner about me being son of Shri Sain Dass the Head Assistant in his office. The Commissioner immediately said, "Ask Sain Dass why he wanted to play with carrier of his son in discontinuing his studies in College"? Babu Behari Lal, the Superintendent designate Revenue Training Institute, who was hearing the conversation quietly, spontaneously responded as under by addressing the Commissioner;

"Sir, what if he passes B.A. or B.Sc.? He would become a Teacher and retire as a Teacher. But here if he becomes a Patwari, he would retire at least as Girdawar. A Girdawar even after retirement would definitely command more respect in society, particularly in rural areas, as compared to other services"

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There was no further talk and I was asked to leave. Later on, when the result was declared, my name figured among the selected candidates. I joined the Institute and completed a year-long training.

Here it may be relevant to add that hardly few days had passed after my joining in the Revenue Training Institute, when result of interviews conducted for undergoing training in Government Polytechnic was also declared, and my name figured among the selected candidates. The selected candidates were asked to join the Polytechnic at Srinagar. Those who did not join within prescribed time were reminded telegraphically with direction to do so immediately. I don't know who and how many others did not join; but I declined the offer and continued with my course at Revenue Training Institute.

One may wonder as to what would be the purpose of wasting time and space utilised in the last few paragraphs in narrating personal happenings, which have no relation with the working of a Revenue Officer. Yes, that is right. The reader has every right to question and the author has the obligation to explain the same. There are two points to be noted here, a) that as earlier indicated I was a Science student, b) that I had applied for, as also appeared in interview, for training in Government Polytechnic. And when result of candidates selected for training in Polytechnic was declared, although I was one among the selected candidates, I declined the offer. No doubt, by the time result of Polytechnic was out, I had already joined the Revenue Training Institute, but when the second option (with better avenue) became available, in making my mind whether to continue there or to quit and join Polytechnic; the spontaneous remarks made by Babu Behari Lal during the course of my interview in Commissioner's office weighed heavy. I preferred the Revenue Department over the P.W. D., despite the known fact that leaving aside other extraneous factors; I was going to be appointed at a much lower salary as Patwari, as compared to that of an Over Seer (now called as Junior Engineer). And I have no hesitation in admitting that I have never regretted that decision. Of course, the purpose of telling the story, with special reference to the remarks of Babu Behari Lal the then Superintendent Revenue Training Institute, and my decision to prefer to opt for Revenue Department despite a seemingly better offer, was just to strengthen the general view about importance of the Department; in those days.

By the time we completed our training in the Revenue Training Institute, and appeared for final examination conducted by the Financial Commissioner, in the last week of July 1959, the Department was eagerly

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waiting; as number of vacancies had piled up for want of trained personnel. Therefore, like many others, I received my first appointment order on 14th August, 1959 to have been appointed as Office Patwari in the office of Deputy Commissioner Jammu, against an available vacancy, in the then applicable pay scale of 50-04-82, with my first monthly salary as Rs 50/-; when Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was the Deputy Commissioner. 15th and 16th being holidays, I joined my duties on 17th of August 1959. It may, however, be in place to mention that in the circumstances discussed in detail in earlier part of the narrative I joined the Revenue Training Institute leaving my studies halfway. But in fulfilling my desire, I did my Graduation from Jammu University later on, as a private student.

After few months of remaining in Deputy Commissioner's office, I was posted in the field as Patwari in Patwar Halqa Rathoa of the then old Tehsil Jammu. I had a quite pleasant experience there and enjoyed my first posting in the field. Fortunately, I developed personal relations and mutual respect with few families which are continuing till date despite lapse of a period of around sixty years. Once again it may be relevant to add that in view of having secured high percentage of marks in Patwar examination, as per rules then prevailing, I had been nominated as Girdawar candidate, and even had a chance to have worked as Girdawar in Tehsil Samba against a leave vacancy for few months. In the meantime, as discussed in detail in introduction chapter, I along with 39 others, came to be selected for undergoing training in Consolidation of Holdings in the cadre of Consolidator (Girdawar Consolidation) w.e.f. 1st of May 1961. After completion of six months-long training, for a brief period I was posted as Consolidator in Tehsil R. S. Pura, before I was picked up to be posted as 'Peshi Qanungo' in the office of Settlement Officer Consolidation Jammu. During the period the Consolidation operations remained off, I was posted as Naib Sadar Qanungo in the office of Deputy Commissioner Jammu; Girdawar and then office Qanungo in Tehsil office Akhnoor. In the cadre of Girdawar, I treat my posting as Instructor (Girdawar) in the Revenue Training Institute Jammu, from 08-09-1965 to 30 11 1967, as my best assignment. That was the period when I could afford to devote much time for study of Revenue laws and rules, which helped me in passing the departmental examination of Naib Tehsildars. Again, during that very period, besides imparting training to two batches of Patwari candidates and a few Naib Tehsildar candidates; I had the pleasure of training the first batch (1965 batch) of K.A.S. probationers of the State, who (including those belonging to Kashmir) were attached with Revenue Training Institute Jammu, for full term of two years. By all means my posing in Revenue Training Institute was enjoyable and memorable.

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After passing the departmental examination of Naib Tehsildars, I was promoted as Naib Tehsildar, in terms of Financial Commissioner's order dated 03-08-1968, and in that capacity major period of my posting was in the Consolidation of Holdings wing with a short time posting as Naib Tehsildar Chicken's Neck Area - part of the Pakistan territory captured by Indian Army during the 1971 war. I remained posted there for around ten months - the period territory remained with India; and during that period besides taking care of civil administration and disposal of standing crops, had the privilege of demarcating International Boundary along Pakistan, in association with Army Survey team; which assignment earned me a **'Letter of Appreciation'** from the State Government. After having passed the departmental examination of Tehsildars and then clearing few more papers to make it at par to K.A.S. standard, I got my next promotion with posting as Tehsildar Samba where I joined on 2nd of November 1973. Thereafter, had the occasion to serve as Tehsildar J. D. A., Tehsildar Leh, Deputy Custodian Evacuees Property Jammu, Tehsildar Hiranagar, R. S. Pura and Rajouri; before elevation to next cadre w.e.f. September 1984, with posting as Assistant Commissioner (General) Anantnag- designate Sub-divisional Magistrate (S.D.M.) for Tehsil Kulgam (now a District).

My next posting as Officer on Special Duty (O.S.D.) with the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, again a memorable period of my service career, needs a special mention. Those old times O.S.D. was the only Staff Officer in the office of Divisional Commissioner. In the first instance, I may point out that the news of posting as O.S.D. did bring both dismay and happiness. Dismay because earlier I had never worked directly under such a senior level officer and was not well versed with office working, particularly the 'noting system' in dealing with office files. I have no hesitation in admitting that on the very first day, the first file concerning certain urgent issue and requiring immediate disposal, when submitted in seeking approval, was received back although had approval of the proposal, yet contained a remark that the note sheet was wrongly tagged. Later on, I did realise that being un-aware of office procedures and of course, inadvertently I had put the note sheet as upside down. On the other hand, one of the reasons for happiness was the home posting, but the real happiness was the time when I sat on the official chair for the first time; in fact, it was a proud moment for me, because it was the same office from where my father had retired around twenty years back., as Section Officer and he was the senior most official after the Commissioner/Divisional Commissioner. Those days there was no post of O.S.D. or Additional Commissioner. When I joined there, I was virtually in

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the same position, but at a much higher level. On the other hand, I would also like to admit that my two postings in succession, first as O.S.D. in the office of Divisional Commissioner and then as Administrative Officer in the office of the Financial Commissioner were in real sense a turning point in my service career. It was this continuous period of nine years when I got chance to work with officers of noted capability and high repute like, Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria, Ms. Shushma Chowdary and Shri N. R. Gupta the then Divisional Commissioners; Shri Hamid Ullah Khan, Sheikh Ghulam Rasool and Shri M. L. Koul the then Financial Commissioners that had helped in sharpening my official capabilities. But for my exposure on these two assignments under the expert guidance of the stalwarts of those times, I would have retired at the most as an Additional Deputy Commissioner. But with the blessings of my elders, well wishes and support of my superiors, and, of course, the grace of Almighty the God, I had occasions to be posted as Director Land Management, Jammu Development Authority, Director Handlooms Development Department, Director Rural Development Department and finally retired from General Administration Department in the highest pay scale of Kashmir Administrative Service (applicable at that time) i.e. the Special Scale of K.A.S., besides few post retirement assignments.

Despite being conscious of the fact that narrative in this part has become a bit lengthy; before closing it, I would like to make mention of at least two key events of my service career as under: -

i. It was roughly the year 1996, when I was posted as Director Rural Development Department Jammu. One day, when I was about to leave for office, my Driver informed that a person with rural background wanted to meet me and explain his certain problem. I asked the Driver to send the man to my drawing room. When we met in the drawing room, I asked the person to express his grievance. In response he explained that he belonged to a poor rural family. But for a small piece of agricultural land, he had no other source of income to support his family; his son has just passed Matriculation examination and wanted his son to be provided some employment against some class IV vacancy. I told him that there were strict Government instructions not to make any recruitment without following the prescribed procedures, and therefore, advised him to apply as and when a vacancy is advertised. On hearing the reply, not to his liking, he got up and started to untie a knot of his 'Gamsha' hanging from his shoulder. I got an impression that he intended to take out some money and offer the same to me. So, I also got up immediately and in an angry mode asked him not to do any misadventure like offering

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any money. In response, with folded hands, he tried to give turn to the situation by saying that I had misunderstood him. He further added that he was a poor man and had no money to offer. On the other hand, he just intended to show me an old paper. By the time he had taken out the paper, which I, still in angry mode, snatched from him and tried to make out as to what his intention was? To my surprise the paper came out to be a copy of a decision passed by me in my capacity as Tehsildar R. S. Pura, more than twelve years back. I read the decision, but could not comprehend as to what was relation of that paper with providing employment to his son? However, as it seemed, he was able to read my state of mind and very humbly explained that long back he had a dispute with someone in the village about possession over a piece of agricultural land, and a case had been filed by the other party in my court as Tehsildar R. S. Pura. He further added that other party was an influential person, and had even approached the local M.L.A., who happened to be a powerful Minister in the then Government, to intervene in getting a decision in his favour. But despite all odds the decision was rightly passed against that party; and in a hope that if I had passed a decision in favour of a poor person like he, ignoring recommendation from a powerful personality, his request for accommodating his son would also find a favour.

The moment I heard the explanation, on the one hand I felt a bit elated, but on the other hand also realised my mistake in exhibiting, a bit rough attitude towards that person without trying to understand the situation in real sense. I asked him to see me in office in the afternoon. Although, providing any employment was out of question, I asked the concerned B.D.O. to ensure his son's engagement in labourer component under some Central/State scheme. Anyhow, the explanation and providing employment are not important here. What matters is that poor people do remember for long, acts of fair dealings, and their memory is definitely more than a Government approved award.

ii. The other event also pertains to the period when I was posted as Director Rural Development Department Jammu. Militancy was at its peak, and Shri Ashok Kumar was the Chief Secretary those days. One day I received a message from the Private section of the Chief Secretary to the effect that the later would like to discuss certain important issue in his office chamber. On the fixed time and date, I called on the Chief Secretary, who, in first instance, was kind enough to recall our successful handling of

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'Law and Order' situations at Samba, more than twenty years back, when I was posted as Tehsildar Samba, and the later was the Deputy Commissioner (District Magistrate) of old District Jammu with Samba as one of its Tehsils. Samba, those old days, used to be termed as a problematic Tehsil known for frequent 'Law and Order' problems. Very surprisingly, despite lapse of a period of more than twenty years, he also recounted the handling of very tense 'Law and Order' situation in Jammu city on the day when, after the famous 'Indra - Sheikh Accord', late Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah took oath as Chief Minister of the State. For the information of the readers, I would like to mention the event in a bit detail as, "on that day there were violent protests from Jan Sangh supporters in the city; City Police Station area being the central battle field, where I was the Duty Magistrate; dingdong battle between Punjab Armed Police (PAP) personnel and the agitating mob went on, making the situation quite tense throughout the day. I vividly recall that in the course of briefing it was informed that protesters had planned to move from City Chowk area towards Secretariat with the intention to disrupt the Chief Minister's convoy. In order to tackle the situation a strategy was chalked out that the protesters will be allowed to move towards Secretariat, but they would be stopped (by another team on duty there) just before the Park opposite Ranbireshwar Temple, and pushed back. As a part of the strategy it was also decided that when the protesters run back they would be cordoned at Shalimar crossing and pushed towards Bus Stand to disperse in open. This was acted upon and the strategy worked well to the extent of pushing the protesters towards Bus Stand, but unexpectedly there was huge stone pelting from behind i.e. from City Chowk area, and as a result even at the very initial stage, PAP personnel became agitated, when some of the Jwans received injuries on account of sudden stone pelting; they wanted 'shoot' orders. After taking the overall situation into consideration, they were asked to wait and watch, but finding the response not to their liking, they (PAP personnel) marched inside the City Police Station in protest. Those days the City Police Station used to be located just adjacent to the City Chowk in a grand old building, which place is presently the starting level of the newly constructed 'J.D.A. Mechanized Multilevel Car Parking'. It was only after the intervention and persuasion of their Commanding Officer that the PAP personnel came out and held the Fort; when they were permitted to go for mild Lathi Charge'

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and use 'Tear Gas' shells in order to disperse the aggressive mob. Under the overall supervision of Shri Ashok Kumar, the District Magistrate, the situation was handled tactfully, taking public into confidence and, of course, with few spells of 'Tear Gas' shelling, but without resorting to a single fire arm shot." He (the Chief Secretary) then added that due to prevailing situation in the State for the last more than five years, there had been lack of contact between the common man and the administration. Politicians, who according to him, could work as bridge between the Government and the public were hesitant to come forward. He emphasised the need for bringing politicians on board, and as a first step, suggested that the Rural Development Department to take the initiative by becoming the torch bearer in the direction of a political process. At that time the State was under Presidents' Rule, and the Chief Secretary headed the administrative set up. Although, it seemed to be a difficult task; yet in view of the confidence reposed in me by none other than the head of the administration, and a known personality for strong free and fair actions, I accepted the challenge.

In order to carry forward the task, I convened an urgent meeting with my District officers, but felt very disappointed by quite lukewarm response, as according to them, it may prove to be disastrous. Majority of the participants in the meeting were of the view that due to a long spell of Governor's or President's Rule in the State, people and in particular those affiliated to major political dispensations have started feeling alienated, and in the case of any such adventure as proposed; adverse reaction including angry outbursts may not be ruled out. Anyhow, since I had committed myself before the Chief Secretary, the District officers were prevailed upon to chalk out details in order to make the programme a success. After prolonged in-house deliberations, it was decided that on a fixed date all important persons from all walks of life belonging to different areas, irrespective of their political affiliation, would be invited for a meeting to be held in the meeting hall of the Directorate; where they would be apprised of the developmental activities being undertaken by the Department, and, of course, their views and suggestions would be sought for. In finalizing details, special care was taken to see that no one, who has even a minor interest in public life, would be left out of the list of invitees. Besides, the officers included in the managing team were made to understand that on the date of meeting; every invitee would be looked after

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well, including providing local transport facilitation, if required by any invitee, and elaborate arrangements, including welcome drink, tea, snacks and sumptuous lunch were decided to be put in place. Instead of issuing a circular letter, as is a general practice in official working, every invitee was individually addressed a well worded demi-official letter. In addition, the District officers were advised to establish personal contact with as many as proposed participants as well; requesting them to make it convenient to participate in the meeting.

On the date and time of the meeting, the response was found to be beyond our expectations. Almost all the invitees, including senior political functionaries of various parties, participated, rather expressed thanks for first ever such an initiative. During the day long deliberations, the participants were made aware of various developmental programmes being implemented. In addition progress of works under taken and those in pipe line under the ambit of the Rural Development Department (Jammu Division) were shared with them. Besides seeking their views and suggestions, they were invited to visit various sites, for which the District officers would ensure all sorts of facilities. Against the apprehensions of a backlash, the meeting ended in the evening with a happy note to organise similar programmes in future as well.

Hardly a period of fortnight or so had passed when a meeting of the District Development Board of Jammu District was held, and as a pleasant surprise, various participants including late Shri Bodh Raj Bali (later a senior Cabinet Minister in the National Conference Government) appreciated activities of the Rural Development Department. At the same time, it may be in place to add here that a copy of the letter, addressed to invitees for their participation in the meeting discussed in previous paragraph, was endorsed along with a list of the invitees, to Private Section of the Chief Secretary for his kind information. At a much later stage; it was learnt that the Chief Secretary had marked the communication as also passed on later developments including a positive response from the participants in the meeting, to the then His Excellency the Governor; the effort was well appreciated at all levels.

In concluding the narrative in this part, it may be added that agreeably the two events discussed herein above pertain to the Rural Development Department, but undoubtedly both the events have

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relevance with activities as also experience gained in the Revenue Department, although undertaken in distant past. Besides, a few days back when I have an occasion to discuss, on mobile phone, the current state of affairs in the State, with a learned colleague Shri Pardeep Gupta, who happened to be the senior Staff Officer (Special Assistant) to the Chief Secretary for a long period, including the period of Shri Ashok Kumar, and has retired only a few years back as the Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shri Gupta did express a view that the State is passing through similar conditions as prevailed during mid-nineties of the past century and a political process of similar kind, as discussed in a previous paragraph, is required to be initiated. Hence mention of these events becomes all the more significant.

It may, however, be in place to point out here that prior to early fifties of the past century Bikrami/Samvat era was in force in official business of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore, in respect of old references Bikrami/Samvat era may find mention. For the facility of readers of new generation, it is clarified that as per formula provided vide note 2 under Article 226 of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations, 1956, Bikrami/Samvat era can be converted into Gregorian date by deducting 56 years 8 months and 17 days from the former (or 57 years in a more practical way).

Similarly, it also merits a mention that in pursuance of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation, Act, 2019 (Central Act No: 34 of 2019 dated 09-08-2019), the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir has been reorganized by dividing it into two Union Territories known as the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, and the Union Territory of Ladakh with effect from 31-10-2019. Major part of the book has been compiled prior to 31-10-2019; therefore, any reference to the State of Jammu and Kashmir would mean a reference to respective reorganised Union Territories. Besides, after enforcement of the said Act, read with subsequent 'Adaptation of State Laws' including in particular 'The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (adaption of State Laws) Fifth Order issued under Order SO: 3808 of 2020 dated 26-10-2020, certain erstwhile State Laws have been repealed or replaced by Central Laws and certain others amended as per details provided in the said Reorganisation Act or subsequent Orders; thus, those provisions have to be read accordingly.

In the end, I must acknowledge that the task of completing the write up in the book could not have been accomplished, had Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria, former Chief Secretary Jammu and Kashmir not acted as my Preceptor in the matter. It was wholly under his day today guidance and

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counselling that the book would see light of the day. He virtually held me by the finger in achieving the target; for which I express gratefulness from the core of my heart. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not mention the name of Pt. Sain Dass - a senior stalwart in the Revenue Department - with finest track record for honesty and knowledge about the working of the Department. He is among very few who joined the Department at the lowest rung as Patwari, and on account of sheer hard work was able to reach the ladder of I.A.S. Whenever I got stuck up on account of any problem, he came to my rescue in solving the same. I would also like to acknowledge the help smilingly extended by Shri Gandharb Singh Librarian and Shri Aneesh his Assistant in the State Archives Jammu, in making available for reading as also providing zerox copies of the required references or other material, as per State Archives rules, as and when needed. Although I am not expert in handling computer, yet the initial typing work of the book was undertaken by me personally, and whenever I got stuck up due to any computer related glitch, my grandsons Abhishek Gupta (Advocate) and Master Shubam Gupta came to my rescue in tackling the same. Therefore, I feel obliged to thank them also for valuable assistance provided in accomplishing the task.

Last but not the least, recalling such events (in narrating achievements) as mentioned in foregoing paragraphs above, do sometimes bring solace, particularly when one is in advanced stage of his life, but it has to be remembered that mortal is just a tool, and nothing happens on this earth without the will of God. At the end of the day, I am at a loss to comprehend as to how I was in a position to handle the situations which came to be faced and solved during a long period of around forty years' active service; followed by around eleven years of post-retirement assignments, such as O.S.D. and Deputy C.E.O. of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Member and Secretary, of the Committee for Demarcation of Geographical Boundaries of Newly Created Administrative Units in the State, Member and Secretary, of the Committee for (Creation of) New Administrative Units, and Consultant Land Management Central University of Jammu. Therefore, following lines of an unknown poet would be most appropriate to be quoted in closing the narrative;

"Mein Chalta Geya, Raste Miltey Gaye;
Rah ke Kantey Phool Ban Kar Khiltey Gaye;
Yeh Jadu Nahein, Kripa Thee Parwardeygar Ki;
Varna Usee Rah Par Lakhon Fisalte Gaye."

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INTRODUCTION

Not only in Jammu and Kashmir but throughout the country, Revenue Department, the Land Revenue or the Land Records Department, by whatever nomenclature it may be or may have been known, is termed as back bone of the Administration. History of existence of the Land Revenue administration dates back to ancient times of Kings and Kingdoms. Admittedly the history of mankind has remained distinctly and intimately associated with land from early days of human development when after abandoning migratory life, agriculture was adopted for sustenance. Right from the initial periods of growth of human civilisation, land has been known to be an important source of livelihood and shelter for whole of the humanity. It was the land which provided basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter to human beings. Land has always been an important locus for the economic activity necessary for human life. Rather, it will not be wrong to say that the land resources and their ownership have all along remained some of the fundamental constituents of any system, which is considered an essential aspect of human societies over the centuries. Admittedly, right from the far distant past, land and its people have always formed the basic frame work of any civilization; while as village has remained the basic unit. Thus, it has to be accepted that right from initial days, the mankind adopted civiliasation, the Land Administration /Revenue Administration centered on realisation of taxes in the form of Land Revenue, which used to be the main source of revenue to the Rulers of the times.

Any developmental activity is nearly impossible to be conceived without taking land into consideration. Since in our country, majority of our population still resides in rural areas which is largely dependent on land, therefore it will not be wrong to say that we will never be able to find structural solution to rural poverty without taking into consideration the land as an important component as also without bringing reforms that would entail equitable access to land. Besides providing food, livelihood

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and sustenance, the role of land in creation of surpluses for capital investment also remains to be of central importance. Thus, the importance of the Revenue Department, which mainly deals with all matters pertaining to land and is the custodian of land records, is also on a higher stage because of the fact that land itself was, is and will always remain a very important component for sustenance of whole of the mankind; in particular for a developing society.

Since, Land Revenue has always remained main source of income of the ruling powers from times immemorial, the land and its proper utilisation always played a prominent role in the agriculture based economic structure of the country, besides exerting typical influence in development of the civil society. It may not be wrong to say that, at least in the past, well-being as also prosperity of a ruler and its people depended upon a proper and affective handling of Land Revenue administration. Thus, considering various factors, it can be said that Land Revenue Department is admittedly an important Department of the Government, which of course deals with difficult, complicated, tedious and vast subjects, including management of land and land records.

Sir Walter. R. Lawrence an English officer reached Kashmir in 1889 to replace A. Wingate to carry forward the work of Settlement started by the former. Walter Lawrence is well known to the people of the State, in particular the Kashmir masses who remember him as Land Settlement Officer and author of his famous book, 'The Valley of Kashmir'. Even after passing a period of more than a century, people of Kashmir still recount his contributions in bringing improvements in land revenue system of the State. For instance, 'Kashmir Life', a weekly Magazine and News, published from Srinagar, in its issue dated 12th of December 2017, has quoted a speech made by Walter R Lawrence on December 13, 1895, at London's Westminster Town Hall in a function that was organized by East India Association. Few opening lines of the Article, titled 'Understanding Kashmir', published in 'Kashmir Life are reproduced hereunder;

"The only Englishman who is more famous in Kashmir than in the U K is Sir Walter Lawrence, the man who is functioning as Kashmir's Land Settlement Officer, is a role still unparalleled."

More details about the personality and other activities of Sir Walter R. Lawrence are covered in Appendix II dealing with Land Settlement (Bandobast).

My view point about the importance of the Revenue Department is supported by what, Walter. R. Lawrence has mentioned in his book,

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'The Valley of Kashmir' at page 399 and 402, excerpts re-produced hereunder;

i. **Page 399:** *"It is usual under the head of administration to treat at length the various branches, executive and judicial, criminal. Police and gaols, revenue taxation and registration, education and medical staff and dispensaries and though all these branches of administration, are to be found in Kashmir, I shall only discuss in this chapter the working of the Land Revenue Department, which is by far the most difficult and the most important branch of the administration of Kashmir. ..... I imagine that in Kashmir, as in other Native States, where civilization is not so far advanced as it is in British India, the happiness and welfare of the people depend almost entirely on the revenue system and the method of taxation. Perhaps owing to the peculiarities of the administration in Kashmir the revenue system has had a more momentous effect on the character and development of the people than it has had in any other Native State."*

ii. **Page 402:** *"As in other parts of India, the chief revenue of the country is drawn from the land."*

Besides, it will also be relevant to note that even after formation of popular Government in the State, it was felt that administration in the Ladakh region was in turmoil. So, considering the interests of public security and with a view to ensure better coordination between the civil and military authorities, a serving Army Officer was appointed as Administrator for the District of Ladakh. The appointment order issued under No: 16/H-48 dated 29th July 1948 as published in Government Gazette dated 24th August 1948 is reproduced hereunder;

"In the interest of the public security and to ensure co-ordination between the civil and army authorities, Col. H. C. Parab of 2/8 Gurkhas is appointed administrator for the District of Ladakh until further orders. He shall have complete control over the civil administration, both executive and judicial in that District. He shall also exercise all the civil revenue and criminal powers which the Wazir-i-Wazarat, Ladakh, has heretofore been exercising. It is further ordered that no appeal shall lie to the High Court from or against any order, sentence or decree passed by him under any law for the time being in force. He shall further exercise all powers vested in the Government, under the Public Security Act, 2003, and the Jammu and Kashmir, Defence Rules as continued in force by the Emergency Provisions (Continuance) Ordinance, 2003 or re-enacted under the Emergency Provisions (Re-enactment) Ordinance, 2004."

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Not only that his successors were vested with powers even under the Income Tax Act as also appointed as Joint Commissioner under Commercial Treaty of 1870 (A.D.).

But for purpose of dealing with Revenue Department matters, Ch. Bharat Bhushan, a Revenue Officer of high repute, was appointed as Special Revenue Officer. For that purpose, he was deemed to be Wazir Wazarat (now days' Deputy Commissioner/Collector).

In this context, para 18 at page 14 of the Report on Census of India, 1941-A.D. (Jammu and Kashmir part), which is relevant to the subject matter of the book, is also reproduced hereunder;

"Revenue Department. Agriculture plays such an important part in the life and economy of the country that it would be well to study the conditions rather closely. Except for those areas under the administration of the Government of India, on behalf of the State, the country is divided into districts and Tehsils under the executive control of the Revenue Department at the head of which is the Revenue Minister who is assisted by a Revenue Commissioner and a Director of Land Records. The senior revenue officer in each of the two Provinces of Jammu and Kashmir is called the Governor of the Province. District officers are called Wazirs, Tehsil officers, Tehsildars and the latter's assistants, Naib-Tehsildars. There is no need to go into the detail of army of Overseers. Surveyors, Clerks, Girdawers, Qanungos, Patwaris, Chaprasis, Zaildars, Lamberdars and Chowkidars, who together make up the staff of the Revenue Department; their numbers are legion and so are their duties. As the name of the department indicates its primary function is the collection of land revenue."

Again, remarks of Shri E. N. Mangat Rai, one of the last I. C. S. Officers of the country who had served as Chief Secretary of Punjab as well as Chief Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir State, about the working of the Revenue Department and its various functionaries, recorded at pages 47 of his book, "Commitment My Style" in the following words are also quite relevant in the matter;

"A good Patwari was a mine of information about a village and could be, when he wished, a source of strength, security and support to its people.

"From the point of view of justice, however, the whole system worked - and worked well - because of the insistence that Officers, from the immediate senior of the Patwari, the "field Kanungo" upwards to the Collector and beyond, were required to visit villages to satisfy themselves

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that decisions were made objectively and in good time. Hence the insistence on touring, on spending nights (not merely days) in remote rest houses, on checking prescribed percentages of entries made regarding cropping, the number of watering given to particular fields and a host of other details which concerned the economics of a village. It was not only the landowner who was caught up in this system but also other classes in the village, including the tenant, whose name was recorded in respect of ever}' field he cultivated, together with the terms of his use of the land."

Financial Commissioner is Head of the Department of Revenue Department, and in order to further add to the view under discussion, names of the senior officers who had been posted as Financial Commissioners since 1956 (A.D.) to 1992 (A.D.) are provided in Appendix-III to the book. A perusal of the names would indicate that only officers with finest track record have been honored with being posted to the coveted assignment as head the Revenue Department. Almost all in the list have retired as Secretary to Government of India, Chief Secretary, or posts equivalent to Chief Secretary and Chairman Public Service Commission etc. Any other Department in civil Government, at least in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, can hardly have the privilege of having Head of the Department of such high status or stature.

State Government Gazette is treated as mirror of the Government functioning. Every action taken in public interest is normally published in the Government Gazette, not for the information of the current generation only, but for the coming generations as well. You open any issue of the State Government Gazette, present period or the past and you will find that there are much number of publications in the form of notifications, orders or otherwise, which pertain to Revenue Department in comparison with any other Department.

Only Revenue Department has got the distinction that if not others but at least Patwari and Qanungo are suffixed to human names from generations, not only in the past but present times as well; and not only in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, but in other parts of the country as well. Qanungo or Kanungo is sometimes used as a short form of Girdawer Qanungo. In this context I quote a few names;

i.	**Shri Nityanand Kanungo**	:	A prominent politician, former Minister for Revenue and Public Works Department Odisha.
ii.	**Shri Bibhu Prasad Kanungo**	:	RBI Deputy Governor.
iii.	**Shri Hemchandra Kanungo**	:	An Indian Independence activist.

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iv.	**Shri Kalika Ranjan Kanungo**	:	An historian, who has written history of Jats.
v.	**Shri Madhu Sudan Kanungo**	:	An eminent Indian Scientist.
vi.	**Shri Binod Kanungo**	:	A freedom fighter and Odia writer.
vii.	**Shri Arjun Kanungo**	:	An Indian singer, composer, actor and entrepreneur.
viii.	**Shri G.M Qanungo**	:	Retired from the J & K State Forest Department as Divisional Forest Officer.
ix.	**Shri Gulam Hassan Kango**	:	Retired from the J & K State Forest Department as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (P.C.C.F.).
x.	**Dr. H.N. Patwari**	:	A doctor by profession, who retired from the J & K State Health Services Department as Deputy Director Health Services (Indian Medicine).
xi.	**Ms Kalpna Patwari**	:	An Assami Bihu Singer.

In other parts of the country as well, such a practice is prevalent, where Patel, Kulkarni and Chhagula are the few instances, by which nomenclature they are known there. One hardly finds such instances in respect of officials of any other Government Department.

Numberdar : Numberdar, Lamberdar, Lambarr or Mukadam by whatever nomenclature he is known in various areas, is a village level functionary of the Revenue Department. His main duty, in the past, used to be to collect Land Revenue and other cesses imposed by the Governments of the time from time to time and deposit the same into the Government Treasury. For that he used to be paid remuneration at the rate of five percent of the amount of Land Revenue and cesses or other charges collected by him, in common parlance known as 'Panjotra'. But now a day's a fixed amount is paid as monthly remuneration; as per latest orders Nambardars are getting a consolidated remuneration of Rs1501 per month. Although, a Nambardars do not fall under the category of a civil servant as per Government Civil Services Regulations, yet besides the election/appointment, their duties or responsibilities, as also procedure for awarding punishment, including suspension or dismissal etc. are governed by the Jammu and Kashmir Lambardari Act No: X of 1972 (A.D.) and the Jammu and Kashmir Lambardari Rules 1980 (A.D.). Anyhow, as

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per sub-section 11 of section 3 of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act 1996, a Nambardar is as good a 'village officer' as a Patwari. In the times of yore, the assignment used to be hereditary, but now for the quite long period the Namberdar is appointed by election. Although, even today, with the changed scenario, a Numberdar still commands respect in his area of jurisdiction, but in the past, he was the person much in demand. Any officer belonging to any of the Government departments, when on an official visit to a rural area, would invariably require presence of Numberdar. Besides collection of Land Revenue and deposit of the same into Government Treasury, he used to be treated as the most respected person of the locality and all disputes of minor nature, whether pertaining to landed or other property, criminal matters like, assault, trespass and theft etc. including inter family matters would generally be amicably settled with the intervention of a Numberdar. He used to assert authority not vested in him by virtue of any enactment, but his locally recognized personality.

If two persons would be fighting, and if someone may try to intervene, very often a common question can be put, are you a Naumberdar or who made you the Numberdar? In other words it means that only a Numberdar and none else has the authority to intervene.

Similar to Patwari and Qanungo, Numberdar is also found to have been prefixed in respect of some of the popular eating points or other institutions. For instance, in Jammu city itself there is a famous eating point, located in Ware House area (behind Hotel Asia) Jammu, especially for non-vegetarian meals, known as 'Lambarr - Da - Dhaba'. There may be innumerable similar examples for eating points located on Highways, particularly in northern part of the country. Similarly, at a number of places, drinking water facilities created for general public along traditional routs are often known as Numberdar/Numberdarni-Da-Khu (Drinking water well of Numberdar/Numberdarni), Lambarr-di-Haveli etc.

Village Chowkidar : In general understanding, the word Chowkidar refers to a person who is responsible for watch and ward of a place or material. But in Revenue Department hierarchy Chowkidar is a person appointed by the competent authority on consolidated remuneration basis, whose main job is to assist the Patwari in carrying out his duties in the area. Generally, there is one Village Chowkidar for each village, but in the case of big villages there may be more than one Chowkidar depending upon number of Chullas (households). He is an important link between the public and Patwari in particular and whole of the administration in general. He is supposed to keep the Patwari informed of all happenings in his area. Similarly, he is also required to keep the S.H.O. concerned informed of all activities of miscreants; rather render all possible assistance in matters connected with detection,

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investigation and prevention of crime, besides reporting births and deaths on periodic and regular basis.

It may be of interest to the readers that strictly speaking, the Chowkidars are not regular or salaried employees of the Government; and their services are not governed under Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations commonly known as C.S.R.; which, in fact regulates the general service conditions including payment of salaries and allied matters of all Government employees from an orderly to the Chief Secretary of the State. At present the Chowkidar is being paid a monthly wage of Rs 1500. At the same time, despite being functionary of the grass root level, appointment, duties and responsibilities including provision for awarding punishments as also dismissal etc. of Chowkidars are governed by the Jammu and Kashmir Chowkidari Act No: XXXVII of 1956(A.D.) and the Jammu and Kashmir Chowkidari Rules 1958. With a view to provide general idea about the nature of duties being performed by a Chowkidar, attention of the readers is invited towards Order No; LB - 10 of 1958(A.D.) dated 22nd October 1958(A.D.), whereby, the Revenue Department had specified duties imposed upon a village Chowkidar. Nevertheless, as provided under section 11 of the Chowkidari Act, a Chowkidar is a 'Public Servant' within the meaning of section 21 of the Ranbir Penal Code., 1989 (samvat), and enjoys full legal protection at par with other civil servants of the State.

Film industry generally depicts traditional and cultural values of a particular area, community or society in general. Songs are life of a particular film. It has been noticed that in old time films, word 'Patwari' has been frequently used in songs, which became very famous. A few instances are quoted hereunder.

i. **Hindi film 'PAGDANDI' released in 1947, staring Akhtar, Gyani, Om Parkash and Padmani etc;**
"Balman Patwari Ho Gaye, Noukar Sarkari Ho Gaye
Patwari Sab Ka Afsar Hai, Yeh Bde Sahb Ka Kehna Hai
Aader Bhi Jari Ho Gaye, Balman Patwari Ho Gaye".

ii. **Hindi film 'SAJAN' released in 1969, staring Manoj Kumar, Asha Parikh Om Parkash and others;**
"Kothe Pe Aarri Ho, Kothe Pe Aarri
Tere Nam Kar Doon Jia Le Aa Patwari
Kesa Patwari Ho Kesa Patwari
Yeh Tu Mera Men Teri, Yeh To Jane Dunia Sari
Kesa Patwari Ho Kesa Patwari"

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iii. Punjabi film 'Bhangra' released in 1959, staring Sunder, Nishi and others;

"Chheti Doli Tore Bawla, Mera Chann Noukar Sarkari
Bouhte Din Janj Na Rakheen, Sadi Kar De Toon Kal Di Tiarri
Jmatan Athh Parh Ke Te Ban Gaya Hai Munda Patwari
Chheti Doli Tore Bawla, Mera Chann Noukar Sarkari"

Punjabi folk music spread over Punjab, (including Pak-Punjab), Haryana and Himachal have got countless songs, duets and couplets, which revolve around Patwari and even sometimes Kanungo (Girdawar Kanungo). For instance, the story of a recently released popular Punjabi film, "AFSAR," revolves around Patwari and Kanungo. The hero is employed in Revenue Department as Kanungo, but father of the girl whom he loves wants him to be a Patwari. So much so a stage comes that the girl approaches him (the hero) to suggest his getting reduced to Patwari and the story moves on. A few of the popular songs and duets in Punjabi, Haryana and Himachal are quoted as under;

"Toon Kahda Patwari Munda Roe Ambian Noo
"Banu Gi Bahu Patwari Kee"
"Mera Mahi Patwari Vey, Draver Gadia Da"
"Vee (20) Gaz Da Kagrra Sut Da, Panj (5) Gaz Di Phulkari
Meri Gut Min Da Patwari Gidey Vich Nachdi Di"
"Kadey Sat (7) Kadey Atth (8) Cup Dinee An Mein Rakh
Tera Changa Peya Va Jattan Nal Vey Patwaria
Mein Hamb Gaye Bnandi Chah Vey Patwaria"
"Zindgi Mein Kuchh Banne Ki Bari Ab Apni Aai
Patwari Ka Farm Bhar Ke Sab Ne Fir Aas Lagai,
Har Koi Banan Chahey Jane Kayu Patwari,
Tiari Kar Raha Har Koi Banane Ko Patwari."
"Kahnu Kanungo Di Gall Karda Patwari Te Patwari Ai"

Ancient scriptures like Kautilya's Arthshastra and Manu Smiriti are full of references about variety of tax codes adopted during those times, as also certain precautions to be taken in imposing taxes. References are also available in the ancient Indian history to the effect that even during Manu's period the Land Revenue was termed as a major source of income of the sovereign. Right from the initial periods of growth of civilization, the State share, which earlier used to be realized in kind, later on part kind and part cash, but hundred percent in cash from late 19th century, was the main source of State's resources through taxation which in common parlance came to be known as 'Land Revenue'. For

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instance, as per 'General Budget' of the State of Jammu and Kashmir for the year 1954 (Samvat)/1897-98 (A.D.) receipt budget had sixteen components, and out of the total estimated receipt budget for the said financial year of Rs 60,75,000, two components namely 'Land Revenue' and 'Grazing Fee' comprised of Rs 35,00,000 and Rs 2,41,000 respectively.

Again, as per an old belief, the Rulers had a divine authority to administer their country as a personal possession and everything including the land belonged to them. The tillers of land were supposed to pay to the Ruler a tax known as Land Revenue, and usually the rate of tax was one sixth of produce. King's right to levy tax was justified by the fact that it was obligatory on his part to ensure protection of his subjects. Besides, it is said that it was utilised only for the good of his subjects. The King collected taxes from them, just as, as per a famous saying, "the Sun draws moisture from the Earth to give it back much more uniformly". It is also an old saying that by virtue of an un-written law prevalent from times immemorial, the ruling power has been receiving specified part of the produce from land, commonly known as Land Revenue and it had been an accepted principle, particularly in whole of the Indian sub-continent, that Rulers of successive Governments in the country had a superior right to a specified share of produce of all cultivated lands. Rather it would not be wrong to say that since ancient times, it had remained a universally accepted principle, that a King or Chief of a territory, over which he had a control, had a prior right to a fixed share of produce from each and every piece of cultivated land. The principle was prevalent in all parts of India without any exception, but may be with minor procedural variations. The view is supported by a reference on these lines in opening words of the first clause of the Punjab Regulation No: XXXI of 1803, which reads;

"By the ancient law of the country the ruling power is entitled to a certain proportion of the annual produce of every bigha of land, excepting in case in which that power shall have made a temporary or permanent alienation of its right to such proportion of the produce, or shall have agreed to receive, instead of that proportion, a specific sum annually, or for a term of years, or in perpetuity."

(Foot note below page 1, chapter I of 'Punjab Settlement Manual by J. M. DOUIE, I.C.S.)

Similar reference is available in preamble to the first Punjab Land Revenue Act No. XXXIII of 1871, which reads:

"The Government of India is by law entitled to a proportion of the produce of land of Punjab to be, from time to time, fixed by it."

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All this lead one to a conclusion that the land resources and their ownership have all along remained some of the fundamental constituents of any system, which is considered an essential aspect of human societies over the centuries. Right from the far distant past, land and its people have always formed the basic frame work of any civilization; while as village has remained the basic unit. Thus, it has to be accepted that right from initial days, the mankind adopted civiliasation, the Land and Land Revenue administration centered on realisation of taxes in the form of Land Revenue, which used to be the main source of revenue to the Rulers of the times.

Admittedly, during ancient times land belonged to the 'King' and rights of cultivators were not specified. References are available to the affect that during earlier Hindu periods, the Rajas owned large chunks of land known as central division, which the later Rajas and including the Sikh rulers called it " the Raja's domain or khalsa". Although, much is not known about transition from State ownership to private ownership, but it is an undisputed fact that till such time private ownership came to be in existence there was not much of interest for the tiller of the land in improving the agricultural practices. Lack of his interest in bringing improvements in the traditional methods of husbandry led to low agricultural produce and that became one of the main causes of loss in the State resources on that account. This factor, it is believed, might have compelled the rulers of the time to think about vesting of, although initially limited, rights upon the cultivators. These developments therefore, created necessity to maintain proper records having details about land, Land Revenue assessed as well as realized, besides other particulars about the tillers of land, their rights and liabilities thereof etc. These records came to be known as 'land records or revenue records' and the department handling these records came to be known as Revenue Department. These records were of great importance as updated information in these records formed basis for resolving disputes among the right holders, as well as the State, besides forming basis for maintaining relevant statistics for future planning as well. Moreover, when such a right is created or proposed to be created, it becomes imminent to determine the person(s) genuinely entitled to the right. At the same time, it also becomes necessary to ascertain the persons who are responsible for payment of Land Revenue assessed for each and every piece of land. The whole process, including assessment of Land Revenue forms part of the operation known as Settlement and any system of assessment and collection of Land Revenue cannot be termed as fair or sound unless legitimate 'Record-of-Rights' in respect of the land proposed

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to be assessed were available. Besides, existence of such a record is otherwise too important to settle disputes, which may arise with regard to various claims to such right. Thus, the most important and foremost record created in respect of each estate is known as 'Record-of-rights', which in common parlance is called as 'Misal-e-Haqiat'. Chapter IV of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat) deals with records such as Record-of-Rights and Annual Records, and Section 21 of the said Act reads as under;

21. (1) Save as otherwise provided by this chapter, there shall be a Record-of-Rights for each estate.

(2) The Record-of-Rights for an estate shall include the following documents, namely: -

(a) Statement showing, so far as may be practicable-

(i) The persons who are land-holders, tenants or assignees of land revenue in the estate, or who are entitled to receive any of the rents, profits or produce of the estate or to occupy land therein;

(ii) The nature and extent of the interests of those persons; and the conditions and liabilities attaching thereto; and

(iii) The rent, land revenue, rates cesses or other payments due from and to each of those persons and to the State;

(b) A statement of customs respecting rights and liabilities in the estate;

(c) A map of the estate;

(d) Such other documents as the Financial Commissioner with the previous sanction of the Government may prescribe.

With a view to accomplish the assigned task, the department has had to perform certain statuary and non-statuary duties and in short, main functions of the Revenue Department may be summarised as under;

(i) to conduct measurement/survey of lands,

(ii) to asses and collect the Land Revenue through subordinate agency and deposit the same into Government Treasury,

(iii) to prepare and update at specified intervals the 'Village Land Records',

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(iv) to exercise statuary and general powers to ensure that all disputes related to land and Land Revenue are settled in accordance with law of the land."

In the context of Jammu and Kashmir, the year 1887 (A.D.) can be termed as a milestone, when the process of Settlement was initiated by Mr. Wingate and later carried forward by Mr. Lawrence. It is said that at that time in absence of valid records the peasants were being exploited by the officials. In order to improve the lot of rural masses, for the first time, somewhat permanent rights were granted to persons who agreed to pay Land Revenue assessed in respect of the land possessed by them. The right was however, not alienable by sale or mortgage. In the Jammu Province the situation was said to be somewhat better. The descendants of the original holders of the land in Jammu enjoyed proprietary rights; many of whom were land-holders of long standing cultivating their own land, while other cultivators were tenants-at-will under the land owners who, of course, formed the oppressed lot and there were no established systems for measurement and assessment of Land Revenue. This process of Settlement operation was later on extended to Ladakh and Jammu regions as well. In the process, lands were measured by adopting procedures prevalent in the adjoining State of Punjab, besides recording rights and liabilities of peasants. More details in respect of other aspects of Settlement are described in the part titled 'Land Settlement', in the Appendix-II.

Revenue administration is closely associated with all round development of the State. The Revenue Department is the custodian of land records and primarily deals with matters concerning land, Land Revenue and maintenance of land records. But its activities also include providing land to landless and protecting State land. Besides, the Department is also held responsible for maintenance of law and order and horde of other multifarious assignments of public importance.

In general, functions and powers of the Revenue Department (as prescribed under various Laws, Rules and Regulations etc. of the State Government) are;

(a) Maintenance of law and order peace and tranquility visa-vis exercise of powers vested upon officers at various levels under the Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Procedure Code in their capacity as District Magistrate, Sub- Divisional Magistrate and Executive Magistrate (s);

(b) Exercise of control and supervision over administration of the District;

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(c) Supervise smooth supply of essential commodities and procurement of food grains in the District;

(d) Realise Land Revenue and other land cases;

(e) Realize arrears of Land Revenue, and dues of other Government Departments recoverable as arrears of Land Revenue under various provisions of the Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat);

(f) Coordinate with Police/Army/PMF;

(g) Perform protocol duties particularly during visits of VVIPs;

(h) Conduct of Parliament/Assembly/Municipal/Panchayat elections etc.;

(i) Conduct of administrative inspections of subordinate offices;

(j) Exercise the powers as Appellate authority under Land Revenue and other Acts;

(k) Designate authority under the Jammu and Kashmir Preventive Detention Act;

(l) Provide aid/relief to and ensue rehabilitation of victims/ sufferers of Natural calamities;

(m) Ensure implementation of the decisions of District Development Boards;

(n) Redress public grievances;

(o) Issue/renew License (s) under Indian Arms Act, oversee movement of explosive material and exercise supervisory powers over Guns and Explosive factories operating within his District.

Administration of the Revenue Department is mainly governed by the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat), although there are a number of other statuary enactments, rules and regulations, implementation of which is the responsibility is of the Revenue Department. The Jammu and Kashmir land Revenue Act, 1996 (1939 A.D) came into force with effect from 29 Bhadoon, 1996, the date when it was published in Government Gazette. Prior to it all matters concerning land and Land Revenue were governed under the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Regulation No; 1 of 1980 (samvat) and certain rules and orders, which got repealed with the enforcement of new enactment. Preamble to the said Regulation reads as under:-

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"whereas it is expedient to consolidate, amend and declare the law in force in the Jammu and Kashmir State with respect to the making and maintenance of record-of-rights in land, the assessment and collection of land-revenue, and other matters relating to land and the liabilities incident thereto; it is hereby enacted as follows."

In common parlance, officers holding various assignments in Revenue Department are known as Revenue Officers. Although there are a number of Enactments, Rules and Regulations which the Revenue Officers are required to deal with and from where they draw their powers for affective performance of their official functions, but the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (1939 A.D/) is the main piece of enactment which codifies classes and powers of Revenue Officers. Chapter II of the said Act deals with the subject.

As per provision contained in sub-section 12 of section 3 of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat), a Revenue Officer is defined as under;

"Revenue Officer: in any provision of this Act means a Revenue Officer having authority under this Act, to discharge the functions of a Revenue Officer under that provision."

Detailed narrative dealing with powers of Revenue Officers under the said Act is indicated in Appendix-I. However, in brief the classes of the Revenue Officer as per section 6 of the said Act are as follows;

Section 6: Classes of Revenue Officers-

(1) There shall be the following classes of Revenue Officers, namely: -
   (a) The Financial Commissioner,
   (b) The Divisional Commissioner,
   (c) The Collector,
   (d) The Assistant Collector of first class,
   (e) The Assistant Collector of second class.

(2) The Deputy Commissioner of a District shall be the Collector thereof; and an Assistant Commissioner and a Tehsildar shall be an Assistant Collector of first class and a Naib Tehsildar an Assistant Collector of the second class.

(3) Unless the Government issues a notification to the contrary, the jurisdiction of the Financial Commissioner shall extend to the whole of the State and of Divisional Commissioner to the Provinces and of Collectors and Assistant Collectors to the Districts and Tehsils respectively in which they are employed.

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With the passage of time its functions continued to increase and in the present day set up, amongst the most important functions include maintenance of law and order. But despite the fact that the department has seen considerable structural and functional changes, its importance remains unaltered. Even today, when conditions have changed to a large extent, posting of an officer as Deputy Commissioner or Divisional Commissioner of a District or Division, as the case may be, is treated as a prestigious posting. The Department is headed by Financial Commissioner. With the change in administrative set up, now a days, many Departments may be headed at Secretariat level by officers holding the cadre/status of Financial Commissioner as, at times, there may be more than one officer holding that cadre/status. But there were the times when there used to be only one Financial Commissioner i.e. head of the Revenue Department. He used to be the senior most bureaucrat after Chief Secretary with ex-officio status of Additional Chief Secretary and figured next to him in the Warrant of precedence as well. Even in one case, the post of Financial Commissioner was upgraded, vide Order No. 318 of 1990 dated 16-03-1990 and declared equivalent in status and responsibility to that of IAS cadre post of Chief Secretary. Under the said order Shri Hamid-Ullah Khan was posted as Financial Commissioner, Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation and Law and Order; the up gradation of the post continued till the same was held by Shri Khan. Discipline, subordination, mutual respect and sense of responsibility towards redressal of genuine grievances of people formed core values of the Department. Whether it is flood, drought, earthquake or fire, outbreak of any natural calamity/disaster, road/rail accident or any other similar situation, Revenue Department is required to play an important role. On these occasions, officials of the Department are always first to reach and extend helping hand in executing immediate rescue work, besides informing higher authorities for further support. Because of the fact that it is the Revenue Department, which comes in to direct contact with the people more than any other branch of the administration, people generally bank upon the officials of the Department in the times of need. Rather, it would not be wrong to say that whether in normal times or in times of difficulty/distress, the Revenue Department acts as the friend, philosopher and guide of the people; rural masses in particular. Another important factor enhancing the stature of the department is that in addition to the tasks assigned to the officers of the department by virtue of various statues of the department; their involvement in other important activities of the administration is invariable. For instance, in conduct of electoral process, in particular, in Parliamentary as well as Legislative Assembly elections, Revenue Officers at various levels play a

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distinctive role. Right from revision of electoral rolls to the counting of votes, officers of the Revenue Department are invariably involved directly or indirectly. Besides, while, every Deputy Commissioner is District Election Officer assigned with the task of controlling and coordinating whole of the election process in respect of his District; middle level officers like Assistant Commissioners and Tehsildars are Returning/ Assistant Returning Officers in one or the other Constituency. In connection with visits of VVIPs/VIPS, Revenue Officers in coordination with Police Department are supposed to keep an eye in every aspect of the functions. Above all during disturbances of any types, it is the prime duty of Revenue Officers; of course, with active involvement of Police Department, to see that law and order is maintained, despite the fact that sometimes they have to face awkward situations and even burn midnight oil to handle the situation.

In nutshell, the Department has got a well-knit and well-established set of hierarchy starting right from the grass root level up to the highest authorities with defined rolls and delegation of powers under various Laws, Regulations and Rules duly passed/approved by the ruling powers of the time. Again, working in the Department is mostly governed or regulated under various Laws or Rules framed there under, and duties as also powers of each and every functionary right from a village Chowkidar to Mashir-e-Mal (Revenue Minister) have been specified under various statues. That may not be the position in respect of other departments, including even some important wings of the Government. Further details in respect of certain important provisions contained in the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act are separately given at Appendix-I while as, a statement showing organisational chart of the Department is available at Appendix -IV.

It also needs a mention that persons whose tales of professional achievements were proposed to be projected in this book were carefully chosen by a process of consultations and discussions with senior and younger colleagues in Revenue Department; but out of the persons so chosen, only those who have responded positively have been covered. Anyhow, the persons included in the book have played definite and positive role in maintaining prestige of the Department as also solving genuine problems of the public, may be at the cost of their personal comfort and, of course, sometimes, even ignoring welfare of their families. But in any case, the list is not conclusive; many others, who have also performed well during their times, may have been left for various reasons including non-communication with those who have settled at some far-off places, old age and alike other reasons. Similarly, many

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colleagues from Kashmir, who were certainly in contact in connection with this project, had to be dropped for want of timely response from them.

At the same time, it would be in place to add that leaving aside exceptions of black sheep in the Department, in general Revenue Officers are termed as the men who often rise to tough challenges as a part of their professional duty; for whom a simple appreciation from their immediate superiors after a job well done, is more than a recognized award. They are the persons who seldom shirk responsibility and duty how so ever tough and difficult the situation may be, and in particular when it is a matter of public sufferings especially in the wake of natural calamities, he stands no comparison. Last but not the least, despite all false and sometimes may be true, negative accusations; a Revenue Officer possesses a very rare quality that one cannot expect 'insubordination' from him.

Before concluding the narrative, it may be added that through this book an attempt has been made to highlight various aspects about the working of Revenue Department as also the traditional role of Revenue Officers. Other aspects which have been tried to be projected are, one that prestige and importance which the Department and its officers used to command in times of yore have of late started diminishing; two that personal contact and rapport which Revenue officers used to have, in the past with people in general and the rural masses in particular, seem to have taken a back seat. With this scenario, it is felt that grip of the administration over the public has started loosening, which negates the very idea of good governance. It is hoped that this humble attempt would focus on the fact that there is need of certain sincere and concerted efforts to be made in the direction of overall improvement in the working of the Revenue Department. There may be people who would not agree with the proposition. But the feeling meant to have been conveyed through the medium of this book represents reality on ground. Thus, finally concluding, a couplet of a poet, very relevant to the subject under discussion, is quoted as under;

"Sach Ko Mein Ne Sach Kaha, Jab Keh Diya To Keh Diya;
Ab Zamaney Ki Nazar Mein Zeh Hamakat Hai To Hai."



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THE BOUQUET

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RAM CHANDRA DOBEY

It was during the reign of Maharaja Partap Singh; once when the summer season had just started and Durbar was still at Jammu. One fine morning the Maharani called her personal staff and expressed desire to proceed to Srinagar along with some of her Sahelis (women friends). For the staff that was a Royal order, as such, required arrangements were hurriedly made and by noon the Kafila (group) started for the journey. Late in the afternoon, the matter came to the notice of the Governor of Jammu, who immediately got a message flashed to the Police agency that the Kafila be stopped where ever it had reached and in case they had not crossed Ramban bridge, they may not be allowed to cross the same and very politely requested to return back to Jammu. The message was acted upon and by late evening the Maharani was back to the Palace; but in a very angry mood. As is common with Indian ladies, Maharani adopted the 'Kope Bhawan' of Ramayna fame route. (Kope Bhawan is a term used for a room or place in a bungalow reserved for sitting/sleeping in isolation. In 'Ramayana' there is a popular story that when King Dashratha decided to transfer kingship upon his eldest son Lord Rama, Kakei, one of the three queens of King Dashratha, got herself confined in the 'Kope Bhawan', as a mark of protest; in order to get the decision regarding transfer of kingship modified in favour of her son Bharta). When the whole episode of the Maharani's having gone and coming back, came to the notice of Maharaja, he immediately rushed to Maharani on a damage control mission. With great hardship Maharaja could restore Maharani's mood with a promise to ensure that her wish would be fulfilled very soon.

Next day, the Governor was called upon to present himself before the Maharaja. (In Maharaja's times the officer in charge of civil administration for a Division, then called as Province was known as Governor. The post was later on re-designated as Commissioner, which now, since the year 1964, is called as Divisional Commissioner.) The Governor could sense the crisis; he got his resignation letter prepared and put the same in his pocket duly signed for use in case a need arose. When questioned by Maharaja about the incident, the Governor replied that

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movement of Maharani or for that matter any member of the Royal family would require lot of protocol and security arrangements to be in place, which in that case were missing. He further added, "Thus he had resorted to the action under reference taking in view the Royal family's honour, and owns full responsibility for the same. In case his action is considered to be in-appropriate, he is ready to step down", he took out the resignation letter and honourably presented to Maharaja. Considering the situation for a few seconds, Maharaja returned the letter to Governor, saying, "your action was justified; and in future in all such situations you will receive prior information to ensure adequate required arrangements."

The piece of above narration is not based on any document, but has been developed after a lot of discussions and consultations with those who have reliable information in the matter and I have valid reasons to believe it to be true; and the name of the officer under reference, i.e. the then Governor of Jammu Province was 'Ram Chandra Dobey' (In some records his name is written as Ram Chand Dubey). As per records available in the State Archives Jammu, Shri Dobey held the assignment i.e. the Governor of Jammu Province from Jeth 1978 to Maghar 1981 corresponding to 1921 - 1924 A. D.

Shri Dobey, a bureaucrat, administrator, legislator and agriculturist was son of the soil. He belonged to a small and remote village Rehi, situate in the Kandi belt of old Thesil Hiranagar. In fact, village Rehi, known in the area as Rehi-Kootah is no village in Revenue records and is a Mohra (helmet) of village Tapyal, but being located adjacent (across Nallah Bein) to famous village Kootah, it became to be known by that name. Earlier it used to be part of Tehsil Hiranagar District Kathua, but in the major re-organisation of Administrative Units in the State a few years ago, village Tapyal is now part of new Tehsil Ghagwal of District Samba. His father late Pt. Sohan Lal Dubey was in the service of Raja Moti Singh of the erstwhile principality of Poonch as General Manager of the Public Works Department and Private Secretary to the Raja. Born on first of Baisakh 1933 (Bikrami), after receiving his initial education at Poonch and Jammu, Ram Chandra got his education in the final phase at Aitcheson Chief's College Lahore and was a recipient of a scholarship of Rs 125/- P.M. from H.E. the then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab. After completion of his College education, he was selected for administrative training by the Punjab Administration, whereafter he joined the Settlement wing of the Revenue Department in the Frontier District, Dehra Ismail Khan - Punjab under the British Government. From the year 1904 (A.D.) onwards, he was posted as Tehsildar in the District of Gurgaon - Punjab

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(now Gurugram-State of Haryana), when he came to the notice of Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. The Maharaja approached the British Government, and in deference to the wishes of the Maharaja, services of Ram Chandra Dubey were transferred to the State of Jammu and Kashmir as one of the 'Lent Officers'. He was one among around twenty such officers, mostly the British, who at that point of time were in the service of Maharaja in the category of 'Lent Officers'. Initially, Shri Dobey was appointed in Settlement Wing of the Revenue Department of Jammu and Kashmir as Assistant Settlement Officer, Udhampur, where he joined on 13th Katik 1966 (Bikrami). Thereafter he was promoted, and had served as Settlement Officer Jammu, Settlement Officer Kashmir and then Settlement Officer Udhampur. However, since Shri Dobey was a State Subject; later on, with the consent of the British Government, he was permanently absorbed in the State Services. Finally, in recognition of his administrative skills and capabilities, he was elevated to the rank of Provincial Governor and remained posted as Governor of Kashmir as well as Revenue Member in Maharaja's Council, besides the Governor of Jammu. He contributed a lot while working in the Settlement Department, where he remained posted for a long period of nine years from Katik 1966 (Bikrami) to Phagun 1975 (Bikrami). I could lay hands on only two 'Assessment Reports' of Tehsils Samba and Ranbir Singh Pura, compiled by Ram Chandra Dobey, which are quite extensive and full of detailed information about those Tehsils. 'Assessment Report' is a very important document, which is written after Settlement work in a Tehsil comes to an end. Although, as could be well assumed from the title itself, a 'Settlement Report' mainly deals with the procedure and principles adopted in arriving at the amount of 'Land Revenue' assessed in respect of a Tehsil for which the whole process of Settlement is completed, yet it often contains geographical as well as historical background and allied statistical information about the area; which of course, remains relevant as also a guiding factor in many respects for future generations.

Among other qualities of head and heart, Shri Dobey was known for encouraging his subordinates by appreciating their good work. Few instances are cited hereunder:-

i. **"Para 71-Notice of officers.**

Assessment Report of Tehsil Sri Ranbir Singh Pura, by Ram Chandra Dobey as Settlement Officer Jammu, dated -camp Miransahib, the 22nd November 1915 (A.D.);

Hari Singh my Assistant is an honest officer of well-known character and reputation, and has supervised this Tehsil well.

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Pandit Anant Ram B.A., Settlement Tehsildar, has conducted the Settlement operation very carefully throughout, and has given entire satisfaction. He is an honest and a very capable officer with good power of control, and is altogether a first-rate officer of excellent character, of whom much can be expected.

Pt. Gian Chand my Head Clerk, has very carefully discharged the duties entrusted to him, and has been valuable help to me in preparation of the Assessment Report. He bears a good character."

ii. **"Para 83: Notice of officers.**

Assessment Report of Tehsil Samba, by Ram Chandra Dobey as Settlement Officer Jammu, dated the third of April 1914 (A.D.);

Before closing my report, I should bring to the notice of the higher authorities the good work done by the officers of this Tehsil.

Munshi Hari Singh, Assistant Settlement Officer, I have pleasure to remark, has above twenty years' service all in Settlement Department. His industry, integrity and honesty are well known. He began to supervise this Tehsil from 1968 (samvat), along with his other duties of demarcation work, his work has been quite satisfactory.

Bakhshi Gyan Chand Bali, Settlement Tehsildar, has held charge of the Tehsil throughout and for the first two years without the supervision of the Assistant Settlement Officer. He is a capable and intelligent Revenue Officer. He was, at first, a Revenue Tehsildar and joined this Department in 1963 (Samvat), and has acquired a good experience of Settlement work. His supervision, control, and work here have been entirely satisfactory.

Bakhshi Jaswant Rai, Settlement Naib Tehsildar, a young man of good abilities, has acquired experience of the Settlement work. His work in the office as my Head Clerk, as well as in the field as Revenue Officer has proved good. He has been of much help to me in the preparation of the report."

Now, a fine example of far-sightedness.

Para 82 titled 'Changes in the limits of Tehsil' of the Assessment Report of Tehsil Samba contains following recommendations: -

"The question of changes of the limits of this Tehsil has been dealt with separately in a prolonged scheme of such alterations for the whole Province, which may take some time to be finally decided. But in view of the fact that the Patwar and Zail Halkabandi have to be re-organised it

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seems desirable to take this Tehsil separately, so that the arrangements may not have to be upset again.

The following changes should therefore, be sanctioned in the boundaries of this Tehsil; fuller details necessitating these changes have been dealt with in the scheme referred to above, which need not be repeated here.

i. Villages Khana-Chargal, Sehal Jagir, Aithem, Pargalta, Chak Largan, Kapur, Malaur, Bain Bajial, Majhin, Rangoora, Doara, may be attached to Tehsil Jammu for various reasons.

ii. Villages Palli, and Bassi-Khurd may be transferred to Tehsil Sri Ranbirsingh Pura."

Interestingly, similar recommendations also had been made in the Assessment Report of Tehsil Ranbir Singh Pura (R.S. Pura) written by none other than Ram Chandra Dobey. Para 70 of the said report reads as under;

"70. The present distribution of villages in Jammu, Samba and Sri Ranbir Singh Pura leaves room for improvement. It was decided in a meeting of revenue Officers that the following alterations might be made in the limits of this Tehsil:-

The villages noted below may be added to Sri Ranbir Singh Pura: -

Jammu Estates: Bahadarklan, Kotli Charkan, Noogran, Chack Khwaskhan, Prithipur, Giddar Gallian, ASmailpur, Skinnderpur, Chack Lala and Sultanpur.

Samba Estates: Palli, Bassi Khurd and Dawal."

On the face of it, the above recommendations seem to be of routine in nature, but there is point to be highlighted. In the month of July 2006, the State Government affected a major administrative re-organisation, vide Cabinet decision No: 153/7 dated 06-07-2006, under which to the existing fourteen Districts, eight new Districts were added, along with three Sub-divisions and twelve new Tehsils. With a view to demarcate geographical boundaries of the newly created Administrative Units, Government constituted a 'Demarcation Committee' headed by Dr. Sudhir S Bloeria former Chief Secretary, of which among others, writer of the book was one of the Members. In the month of February 2007, the Committee submitted comprehensive report comprising 402 pages. Interestingly, the recommendations made by Shri Ram Chandra Dobey in the Assessment Report of Tehsil Samba prepared in the year 1914 (A.D.) and the Assessment Report of Tehsil

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Ranbir Singh Pura prepared in the year 1915 (A.D.), among various other recommendations, were part of the 'Report' of the 'Demarcation Committee' submitted in the year 2007, although, at that time the 'Demarcation Committee' had no clue about earlier recommendations made by Shri Dobey in the Assessment Reports under mention. More or less based on the recommendations of the Committee, the Government, vide order issued under SRO No:185 of 2007 dated 22-05-2007, revised geographical boundaries of Administrative Units in the State, and the recommendations under reference were accepted almost in full.

The point to be impressed here is that need for re-location of certain villages, as discussed earlier, was visualised by the officer (Ram Chandra Dobey the then Settlement Officer, Jammu) long back, which was found to be relevant even after lapse of about a century (93 years to be more precise).

Another achievement

In the year 1927 (A.D.), while Ram Chandra Dobey was posted as the Governor of Kashmir, he had compiled a comprehensive report titled, "Brief History of Revenue Administration in Jammu and Kashmir". Although, despite best efforts I could not lay hands on the document, but references to that effect are available in the State Archives' records.

The period, when Ram Chandra Dobey served the State, particularly the period when he functioned as Provincial Governor of the Provinces of Jammu as well as Kashmir, was a time of great transformation as democratic forces competed with regional identity in an undercurrent that culminated in opposition to the ruling power. He proved his worth as a skillful and firm administrator, in providing a stable administration even in those difficult times. Shri Dobey retired from Government service in the year 1929 (A.D.). However, in the year 1932 (A.D.), he was elected to the State Legislator and served as the leader of 'Liberal Party' till his final retirement a decade later.

An important social aspect of his life

Before going to the story, it will be in place to explain certain terminologies/traditions which would figure herein after, as under:-

i. **BANGLA**- The word denotes an improvised 'palanquin' used for carrying the bridegroom usually in royal families. Whereas, the palanquin used for carrying the bride is known as 'PALKI' or 'DOLI'. Bangla or Palki/Doli is carried by four to eight persons (village helpers).

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ii. **GHORRI**- In local language it is used for a mare, in particular the one on the back of which the bridegroom is taken to the bride's house. At the same time, it also denotes the typical songs sung, as a mark of celebrations on the occasion of marriage, at bridegroom's house. While songs sung at the bride's house are known as 'SUHAG'. Till few decades ago such ceremonies would start from not less than a month in advance and conclude up to the date of marriage. Every day late in the evening, ladies from whole of Mohalla/village would gather at the house of bride/bridegroom and sing GHORRI/SUHAG as the case may be, for hours together and sweetmeats would be distributed to all the participating ladies.

iii. **Marriage Tradition**- As per tradition, especially prevalent in north India, excepting royal families, the bridegroom is taken to the house of the bride while sitting on the back of a well decorated mare, in common parlance called 'GHORRI". But in the native village to which Ram Chandra belonged, it is said, there was a tradition to take the bridegroom in a 'BANGLA'. Nobody knew since when and for what reasons that tradition came in practice, but the same applied to all the families residing in that village irrespective of class or creed.

It is said that Ram Chandra had two wives, and it was the occasion of marriage of one of his sons namely, Hira Nand Dobey. At that time, he was posted as Governor and just at start of the ceremonies, he had consultations with his elders as to why the exceptional tradition of taking the bridegroom in a BANGLA can't be discontinued. Finding no justified merit in continuation of the tradition, he decided to do away with the same and declared that the bridegroom would go on mare (GHORRI) back instead of taking him in BANGLA. While that was a revolutionary step and was not liked by many old-fashioned ones, mother of the bridegroom was (mis)informed by someone that her counterpart had played a mischief in influencing her husband to take such a decision, as she would not like to see her step son going in BANGLA. It created a surcharged atmosphere at home and one day the lady declared to observe hunger strike in protest against the "unjust decision". On third-fourth day of the protest, in order to break the stalemate, sister of Ram Chandra Dobey is said to have taken a bold initiative; she went in the room where ladies were singing songs and authoritatively asked the ladies to stop singing GHORRI and instead sing BANGLA. The ladies, very surprisingly, replied that always and everywhere ceremonial song known as 'GHORRI' is sung in the event of

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marriage of a male member; they have never heard of BANGLA being sung on such occasions. They were confronted with a question, "then why you people take bridegroom in BANGLA, whence in whole of 'Duggar Pardesh' the bridegroom goes while sitting on GHORRI. That created a commotion and there started 'KAANA PHUSSI', (a discussion in low voice and mostly in others' ear). Further discussions and consultations in the matter resulted into a break through, and finally mother of the bridegroom was prevailed upon to accept the decision in the interest of good of general masses in doing away with a practice not prevalent anywhere else. This way, with an initiative of Shri Ram Chandra Dobey, the age-old tradition of taking bridegroom in 'BANGLA' (restricted to a single village only) came to an end.

And, last but not the least; Ram Chandra Dobey is known to have helped everyone, particularly those belonging to his native place and adjoining areas. Who so ever would approach him, was heard with patience and his demands/requests accommodated to the extent possible.

Shri Ram Chandra Dobey passed away in March 1951 at the age of Eighty-four years as a popular Revenue Officer of good standing.



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CHOUDHARY BHARAT BHUSHAN

Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was one among the legendary, successful, committed and most admired Revenue Officers of Jammu and Kashmir in the post-independence era. Born on 11-08-1975-Samvat, (23-11-1918-A.D.) in the family of Choudhary Baldev Dass - a School Teacher by profession; who himself had remained a meritorious student of his times. As per the information shared by their family sources, Choudhary Baldev Dass was among brilliant students of S.R. High School (now known as S. R. M. P. Higher Secondary School) Jammu, even now a day's known as the top-ranking Government School of Jammu. He (Choudhary Baldev Dass) is said to have got first class in Matriculation examination of Punjab University in the year 1911(A.D.) and stood first in the School; which awarded him a silver medal. After passing his B.A. in 1915(A.D.) from Prince of Wales College (later re-named as Government Gandhi Memorial Science College) Jammu, he joined Education Department of the State.

Choudhary Bharat Bhushan is linked to famous Choudhary genealogy of Jammu. The Choudharys of Jammu are known to have distinguished themselves in the fields of trade, commerce, administration and social welfare services. It is said that during the reign of Raja Ranjit Dev (1750-81), one Shri Duni Chand (1705-58) was picked up to be appointed as 'Revenue Collector' for Bandralta territory (now known as Ramnagar) and was called Choudhary. After death of Duni Chand his son Datta was appointed the 'Revenue Collector', who worked as such for seven years. He was followed by his brother Champa Shah as 'Revenue Collector'. Similarly, in mid-fifties of nineteenth century, Maharaja Gulab Singh created a new township of Udhampur, to commemorate the memory of his late son Kanwar Udham Singh. This way all their descendants came to be known as 'Choudhary'. Prominent among the Choudhary clan (twentieth century period) are, Kishan Chand, Ganesh Dass, Girdhari Lal, Ram Chand Mahajan, Mohan Yawar, Choudhary Rabendra Nath, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan and Choudhary Indu Bhushan

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etc.; out of whom, in view of space constraints, short introduction about a few is shared as follows;

i. **Shri Kishan Chand.** He joined his father's old-time trade of forest lessee in the year 1902 at the tender age of 16 years; to be later joined by his sons Ram Chand, Ganesh Dass and Girdhari Lal again at quite early ages. His property mark is registered as 'K.C.', which stands for Kishan Chand. The family owns 'Public Schools, Cinema Halls, manufacturing units of Paints, Biscuits, Joinery, Flour Mill etc., and also runs a charitable Trust known as 'Kishan Chand Charitable Trust' engaged in upliftment of poor and needy.

ii. **Shri Ram Chand.** Also, fondly known as Ram Chand Mahajan, besides trade and business, he was actively associated with politics as well. He was twice elected as Member of the J & K Legislative Assembly, later also the Member Legislative Council for a term of six years and had remained Treasurer of the J & k P.C.C. (I) for quite a long time.

iii. **Shri Mohan Yawar.** He is known as a famous story writer in Urdu, with at least 12 story books at his credit. An awardee from J & K Cultural Academy on publication of a story book 'SAYAH TAJ MAHAL'; his stories and speeches delivered and broadcast on radio Jammu always received great appreciation.

Choudhary Bharat Bhushan is one amongst the direct descendants of Duni Chand the fountainhead of the Choudhary lineage and belonged to Jammu city. Like his father, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan also had a brilliant academic record. After passing his Matriculation, he joined Prince of Wales College Jammu. He stood first in F. Sc. examination in the year 1936, beating previous records of Punjab University, Lahore, and then obtained Bachelors' degree in the year 1938 (A.D.) with 80% marks. He did his M. A. from the same, University in the year 1940. He appeared in Kashmir Civil Services (Civil) in short K.C.S (Civil) (the coveted service in the State at that time) in the year 1941; it had two branches i.e. K.C.S (Civil) and K.C.S. (Judicial). Choudhary Bharat Bhushan cleared the exam with flying colours by securing first position in the merit list. He remained on probation and under statuary training from 22-10 1997 (Samvat) to 21-10 1999 (Samvat).The K.C.S(Civil) Rules provided for every probationer to pass departmental examination minimum by Tehsildar standard, and as per Notification published in the Government Gazette dated 22 Magh 1999, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was notified to have passed the examination (completely) by Wazarat (Deputy Commissioner) standard i.e. at a higher standard and that too, before completion of

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probation period, which distinction was generally very rare. After completing his training, he was posted as Tehsildar w.e.f. 22-10-1999 and served as Tehsildar Bhimbar, Kotli, Jammu, Ramban, R. S. Pura, Uri (Kashmir) and Kathua, besides short period of postings as Special Tehsildar Akhnoor, Special Tehsildar Samba and Chairman Debt Conciliation Board, Doda etc.

During the initial periods, after formation of popular Government in the State, administration in the Ladakh region was in turmoil. Considering the interests of public security, a serving Army Officer, Col. H. C. Parab of 2/8 Gurkhas was appointed as Administrator for the District of Ladakh. He was to have complete control over the civil administration, both executive and judicial in that District, besides having powers to exercise all the Civil, Revenue and Criminal powers which the Wazir-i-Wazarat, Ladakh, had been exercising. He was even authorised to exercise all powers vested in the Government, under the Public Security Act, 2003, and the Emergency Provisions (Continuance) Ordinance, 2003. It was further ordered that no appeal shall lie to the High Court from or against any order, sentence or decree passed by him under any law for the time being in force. At that critical juncture, for dealing with Revenue Department matters, vide Cabinet Order No: 1302-C of 1950 dated 11-11-1950, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, being a Revenue Officer of high repute, was specially picked up and appointed as Special Revenue Officer Ladakh. He was authorized to hear appeals against orders passed by Assistant Collectors and for that purpose the 'Special Revenue Officer' was deemed to be Wazir Wazarat (now days Deputy Commissioner).

In pursuance of Government Order, No: 234-C of 1954 dated 26-02-1954, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was elevated and posted as Deputy Commissioner Baramulla (Kashmir) where he remained posted from 22-11-2010-Samvat (05-03-1954-A.D.) to 31-10-1955-A.D. Thereafter, he served as Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Jammu and Poonch-Rajouri Districts, before being posted in the Civil Secretariat as Secretary to Government. Some old Revenue Officers from Jammu have shared that when posted as Deputy Commissioner Jammu, he would preside over monthly meetings with Patwaris at Tehsil headquarters and review the individual progress of each Patwari, particularly in respect of writing up of Jamabandis. He would often confront the Patwaris with regard to individual progress with reference to figures noted by him in his diary during earlier meetings. He was known for his skill in getting work from his subordinates. He would not hesitate in showering words of appreciation upon good workers and admonishing the bad ones.

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Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was lucky enough to be part of the first batch of officers inducted into Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.) w.e.f. 01-01-1958, from the State of Jammu and Kashmir, in pursuance of Government Order No: 4-C of 1958 dated 20-08-1958. He got another elevation in the year 1964 when he was posted as Commissioner Jammu Province. It may be noted that the Provincial head of the Revenue Department earlier used to be known as 'Governor', thereafter 'Commissioner' and with effect from 1964 as 'Divisional Commissioner'. Choudhary Bharat Bhushan remained posted as Commissioner/Divisional Commissioner Jammu for the longest period from 09-10-1963 to 22-02-1965 and then from 15-11-1966 to 24-06-1973. His name manifests one of the most successful administrators as also a 'Hard Task Master' of the time. During the tenure of his posting as Commissioner/Divisional Commissioner Jammu, apart from his normal functions as Divisional head of the administration, people of Jammu do remember him for his concerted efforts towards some of the contributions as detailed below: -

i. 'First' Central School' in Jammu (now known as Kendrya Vidiyala No: 1), of which Choudhary Bharat Bhushan had also remained as the first Chairman.

ii. 'Sainik School' Nagrota, Jammu; bulk of construction work of the School building was done during his time.

iii. New Bus Stand; earlier there was no formal Bus Stand and busses used to be parked at and plied from open space available opposite Brahmin Sabha, Parade Ground Jammu.

iv. Making land available for Jammu Medical College and Jammu University (new Campus) after getting the same released from the Army.

Shri Sain Dass, popularly also known as Pt. Sain Dass, served in the Divisional Commissioner's office for a period of more than thirteen years from year 1962 to 1975, till he was picked up by Thakur Devi Dass and appointed as his P. R. O., on the latter's induction into Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah Cabinet in the year 1975. He worked there under various capacities; first of all, he was posted as Reader (Naib Tehsildar), as P. A. (Tehsildar) and then Officer on Special Duty (O.S.D.) with Divisional Commissioner Jammu. He had the occasion to work under several Divisional Commissioners including Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, who had the longest stay of around eight years as Commissioner/Divisional Commissioner Jammu. Therefore, no other person could know better

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about Choudhary Bharat Bhushan than Shri Sain Dass; as such views of the latter about the working style of the former, in his own words, are narrated hereunder.

"Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was one of the best officers and administrators, the State ever had. He always rendered highly commendable and very useful services to the State in different capacities during his well cherished service of around forty years. But services rendered by him as Divisional Commissioner Jammu continuously for more than eight years were noteworthy. He was always in touch with the Deputy Commissioners and other subordinate Revenue Officers functioning in the Division - whom he would know by names - and would ensure that problems of the people living within the local limits of their jurisdiction are solved in rightful manner then and there. In addition to his normal administrative and other functions he had special aptitude in delivery of justice in matters which used to be brought before him for disposal in his appellate or revision jurisdiction. He had complete knowledge of Revenue and other connected laws. He would, therefore, hear the arguments of learned Counsel for the parties in matters scheduled for hearing, go through the impugned orders as also the relevant files, and deliver his judgement then and there in presence of the parties, without adjourning any of such cases. Certain times, if he was out on tour and was scheduled to return to the headquarter on a particular working day even in the afternoon, he would pass instructions not to adjourn any of the cases fixed for hearing, and also to request the advocates to be kindly remain present; so that case work did not suffer. In number of cases where Counsel had not intentionally made his appearance or where parties had not been able to engage any Counsel, he would study the issue himself, hear the parties and deliver his judgement without adjourning the file.

"Besides the case work, quite frequently some enquiries of important nature also used to be entrusted to him by the Government. He would see that justice was done to each enquiry, and enquiry reports sent to the Government well in time.

"It is also necessary to be placed on record that work for him was worship and he would always ensure that even the subordinate staff working in the Division were quite prompt and fair while dealing with the problems of the people and accomplishing routine work. He would not tolerate any harshness or misgiving on their behalf to the people or delay in completing timely work. Still if any lapse was noted by him in behavioral attitude of the subordinate officials working in the field, he would catch

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hold of them, give a strong verbal warning to remain vigilant in future and ensure that no such lapse reoccur in the discharge of their duties or in dealing with problems of the people for whom they work in the field. But despite such a harsh aptitude, he would not mar the career of any of the subordinates through punitive action."

In addition to his other qualities of head and heart, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was also known for protecting his subordinates in hour of the need. In this context few events related to him are narrated in following paras: -

i. **A story shared by Shri Rajinder Singh Parhihar a retired I.A.S. officer;**

"It was probably the year 1975-76, when Kandhara Singh an officer known for his honesty, hard work and devotion to duty was posted as Tehsildar Samba. As per order issued from Revenue Secretariat, most likely on political reasons, Kandhara Singh was transferred and another officer (name withheld) posted in his place to join immediately. At that time Shri K. D. Sharma was the Divisional Commissioner, Shri Parihar was posted as Officer on Special Duty in his office, while Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was the Financial Commissioner. By the time the new officer came to join, the matter had come to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner and the Divisional Commissioner. The Divisional Commissioner spoke to Kandhara Singh and asked him not to hand over charge till further instructions advising the new officer to report to him. Accordingly, when the new officer reported to the Divisional Commissioner, he took up the issue (on phone) with the Financial Commissioner. Thereafter, Shri Parihar was asked to take the new officer to Financial Commissioner's office. When Parihar reported to the Financial Commissioner, he in turn took up the matter with the Revenue Secretary and sought reasons for sudden transfer of Kandhara Singh, that too, without his knowledge, he being Head of the Department. When told that order had been issued under an urgent direction from the Revenue Minister, he said, "what for the telephones are there? I could have been consulted on telephone". Since the Revenue Minister was at that time out of station, the Financial Commissioner informed the Revenue Secretary that the new officer is being sent back for the time being; let the matter be put up to Revenue Minister for his orders on his return to headquarters for withdrawal of the order. (Later the order was withdrawn)."

ii. **Shri Ved Parkash Gupta, a retired Revenue Officer known for his intelligence and integrity, who happened to have worked with Choudhay Bharat Bhushan as his P.A. (Tehsildar cadre) and also**

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as Tehsildar in the field subordinate to the latter, when the later was functioning as Divisional Commissioner Jammu, has once shared his pleasant feelings in respect of the latter in the following words;

"Having got occasions to work with stalwarts like Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, one should proudly set them as role models. I still relish the experience I had with a person who knew men and areas perfectly, besides being a guiding star for his subordinates."

iii. **S. Faqir Singh a Revenue officer, who retired from the post of Additional Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur had once disclosed another similar story;**

After serving for a long period of four years as Naib Tehsildar, he was transferred and posted in Tehsil Jammu. The incumbent posted in his place at Chhamb was not accepted by the people for certain local reasons. Another Naib Tehsildar posted was himself not interested in joining there. The matter came to be discussed in a meeting in the office of Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, the then Divisional Commissioner Jammu. It was felt that dealing with Chhamb people was not an ordinary affair and only some tough, straight forward and experienced officer could handle the station. After considering many options, the then Deputy Commissioner Jammu proposed that Faqir Singh be posted back there for some time. The Divisional Commissioner is said to have very harshly reacted in the following words.

"Faqir Singh Ne Keya Theka Le Rakha Hai." (Has Faqir Singh signed a contract to be posted there?).

Thereafter, some other incumbent was posted and made to join at Chhamb."

(Names of some officers have been withheld)

iv. **Shri Suraj Parkash Sharma a retired Revenue Officer, known to be the most knowledgeable in matters related to Revenue Department, and in particular, human encyclopedia about dates of birth and dates of appointment of almost all the Revenue Officers, whosoever had ever come to his contact, has once related an event shared with him by Choudhary Bharat Bhushan himself long back; the same is reproduced as under;**

"Hardly 6-7 months had passed after his posting as Tehsildar Ramban, when Maharaja Hari Singh camped there while en-route from Srinagar to Jammu. It may be in place to point out that Ramban falls on

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Banihal Cart Road (now National Highway No: 1) and is almost mid-way from Jammu to Srinagar or vice versa. During old times it was normal routine for every dignitary or a senior officer moving up or down to halt for a while; sometimes even would stay for the night at Ramban. For that purpose, a P.W.D. Dak Bungalow exists there which is ideally located on the hillock overlooking the National Highway as well as river Chenab. While taking care of various administrative arrangements, Tehsildar was required to move in and out. The Maharaja took note of a young lad moving around very enthusiastically. So, the Maharaja asked his Staff Officer to call the person in and inquired about his introduction. Choudhary Bharat Bhushan when introduced himself to be Bharat Bhusha the Tehsildar of Ramban, the Maharaja patted him as also expressed extreme happiness in seeing him in active action, which according to the Maharaja confirmed the information he earlier had, about Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, to be a competent officer, through his information channels."

v. **Shri Bishan Dass, another retired I.A.S. Officer once shared that during the period he was undergoing training as K.A.S. probationer, Choudhay Bharat Bhushan delivered a lecture, and he remembers;**

"We had also an occasion to interact with the grand old man of Revenue Department, Chaudhary Bharat Bhushan. He had colossal memory, vast knowledge and wide experience. He seemed to have cultivated an appetite for work and we were taken aback when he told us that in one of his camps during his tour in some remote village of Ramban Tehsil he attested 132 mutations in a single day. Even if these mutations were required to carry nominal orders like those of devolving of inheritance or transfers of rights through sale deed, still the quantum of work it involved was mind boggling. The young officers need to get inspired by the work of such stalwarts and should set them as their role models."

vi. **Amit Kushari, a native of Bengal who was a Jammu and Kashmir State Cadre I.A.S Officer, and retired in the post of Financial Commissioner Revenue of the State, in his Article titled, "Bureaucrats of Yesteryears", published in News Paper - 'Daily Excelsior' dated 2nd August, 2013 has mentioned as under;**

"When I look back at those years when I had started my service in Jammu and Kashmir, memories of many once- powerful bureaucrats of the State come vividly to my mind. ..... . Those days S.A.S. Qadri Financial Commissioner was a very powerful bureaucrat of Jammu and

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Kashmir. So was Mr. Bharat Bhushan Choudhary in Jammu. Mr. Bharat Bhushan was a very good-hearted bureaucrat who enjoyed talking. He would often regale his audience by recounting stories of his youth when he was working as Naib Tehsildar or Tehsildar. He was familiar with almost every village of Jammu province. ....."

Author's note: Choudhay Bharat Bhushan was directly appointed as Tehsildar and had never remained posted as Naib Tehsildar. Possibly he may have functioned as Naib Tehsildar as a part of his statuary training of two years.

Some other noteworthy events of the service career of Choudhary Bharat Bhushan:

i. Vide Government Order No: 1958 of 1975 dated 01-10-1975 Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was appointed as Additional Chief Secretary, with order to continue to additionally hold charge of the post of Financial Commissioner (Now day's known as Financial Commissioner Revenue) and Secretary to Government Relief and Rehabilitation Department. During those old times, there used to be only one post of Additional Chief Secretary to be number two in bureaucratic hierarchy.

ii. He was appointed as Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, which assignment he took over on 8th of January, 1977.

iii. Again, vide Notification SRO 371 dated 03-07-1979 Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, Member Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission was elevated and appointed as Chairman of the said Commission with effect from 1st June, 1979; wherefrom he retired in January 1981.

iv. Even when he was posted in Civil Secretariat, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan was often conferred with powers of Financial Commissioner (Revenue) to hear and dispose of revision petitions arising out of orders passed by other officers in capacity as Divisional Commissioner under the Land Revenue Act, and also such other cases as may be transferred to him by the Financial Commissioner. One such example is Notification SRO No: 321 dated 02-06-1973.

On 28-09-2011 A.D. Choudhary Bharat Bhushan left for his heavenly abode at the age of ninety-three years, and his death was widely mourned by Jammuites in general and retired Central as well as State

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Government officers in particular. His funeral procession attracted large number of mourners from all walks of life. Almost all local News Papers of the city covered the obituary news and paid tributes to the departed soul in their own ways; out of which full text of the one published in, 'Early Times' is reproduced hereunder;

"JAMMU, September 28: A highly acclaimed, outstanding administrator of the State and former Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan passed away at his Green Belt Park residence this afternoon after prolonged illness. He was 93. He is survived by his wife Smt. Kanta Choudhary, a son, two daughters, grandsons and grand-daughters. Born on November 23, 1918, in Jammu, he was known for his integrity, honesty and firmness as an able administrator. He had a brilliant academic career and stood first in F. Sc. in Punjab University in 1936. He also stood first in the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services competitive examination in 1940 during Maharaja's rule and was appointed Tehsildar. He was among the first batch of State officers inducted into I.A.S., and rose to the rank of Additional Chief Secretary. After retirement, he was appointed in 1976 as Member of the State Public Service Commission and its Chairman in 1978.

His last rites would be performed at Shastri Nagar Cremation Ground on Thursday at 4.30 P.M.

Meanwhile; Public Service Commission held a condolence meeting at Srinagar and mourned the sad demise of Choudhary Bharat Bhushan. Rich tributes were paid to the departed soul by Chairman S. L. Bhat who recalled his contributions to Public Service Commission and other departments in which he had served with distinction.

A two-minute silence was observed by the Public Service Commission Members in the honour of the departed soul."

A great soul remembered by all, particularly by those whom he groomed to become good Revenue Officers.



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S.A.S. QADIRI

When I started compiling material for the book, and included the name of Shri S.A.S. Qadiri in the list of officers intended to be covered, he was one of the oldest surviving Revenue O+fficers from Kashmir, rather whole of the State at that moment. Unfortunately, while the book was underway, Shri Qadiri left for his heavenly abode on 2nd October, 2018 at the age of ninety-nine years (a few months short of hundred years). His obituary was not only covered almost by all leading News Papers of the Valley, but few Jammu based News Papers as well. As per official records his date of birth was 09-02-1919. He was born in a respectable family of Kashmiri descent reputed to be having scholarly and spiritual background. His full name was Sayed Ahmed Sayeed Qadiri. After receiving early education from Bisco Memorial School Srinagar and Graduating from S.P. College Srinagar, he did his M. A., LL. B from Aligarh Muslim University. Thereafter, he tried his luck in non-gazetted cadre for some time before he got a chance to serve in S.P. College Srinagar as Lecturer in Mathematics. While serving as Lecturer (5/1999-samvat to 3/2000-samvat), in line with his deep-rooted desire to be part of Executive Service; he prepared himself for appearing in the Competitive Examination, and finally he was part of the 1943 (A.D.) batch of officers selected through Competitive Examination for Civil Services then known as Kashmir Civil Services - Civil in short K.C.S. - Civil. There was only one such examination held in the State during the pre- independence era. He also became part of the first batch of officers inducted into Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.) from the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1958, in pursuance of Government Order No: 4-C of 1958 dated 20-08-1958, w.e.f. 01-01-1958. Besides having served as a Revenue Officer in various capacities from Tehsildar of important Tehsils like, Kishtwar, Muzaffarabad, Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam to the Financial Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir (now a day's known as Financial Commissioner-Revenue); he had held various important assignments under the State Government such as, Director Food and Supplies Kashmir, Custodian Evacuee's Properties Jammu, Registrar Co-operative Societies Jammu and Kashmir, Divisional Commissioner

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Kashmir, Chief Electoral Officer Jammu and Kashmir, and remained posted in Government of India as well. He had the distinction of being the Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir for longest term from 05-01-1968 to 04-11-1971, and the Financial Commissioner now known as Financial Commissioner (Revenue) from year 1971 to year 1974. Similarly, he held the coveted assignment of the Chief Electoral Officer of the State of Jammu and Kashmir for a long period including holding additional charge on few occasions. He was known as one of the toughest task masters of his times. During the period he was posted as Financial Commissioner; a novel experiment of having combined the posts of Financial Commissioner and Revenue Secretary was tried, which system was, however, discontinued later on. But, there is a thinking supported by a good number of people connected with the Department to the effect that revival of the system experimented by Shri Qadiri deserves to be re-considered in the interest of better administration as also co-ordination of affairs of the Revenue Department. While he was posted as Financial Commissioner; he used to have regular review meetings with special thrust towards implementation of the Agrarian Reforms Act, 1972 (later on repealed to be replaced by Agrarian Reforms Act, 1978) at Tehsil level. During one such meeting, he narrated an event that had occurred during his training period in the following words:-

"As a part of the training schedule as K.C.S (Cvil) probationer, he was deputed to remain attached with a Patwari of Srinagar District for gaining practical knowledge about the working at the lowest rung of the Department. When he reached the Patwar Khana (Patwari's Office) of the assigned Patwari, he found that the Patwari was surrounded by a number of Zamindars, who had, presumably, come to him for their individual requirements. He paid his respects to the Ptwari twice, but there was no response. Only on third repetition, the Patwari raised his head and enquired the purpose of his visit to him. When introduced, the Patwari asked him (Shri Qadiri) to take 'Chilm' of his 'Hukka', get the same cleaned, prepare for smoking and bring that back for his (Patwari's) use (smoking). He complied and only thereafter the Patwari asked him to take his seat. Of course, later the Patwari attended to him and provided all sort of information and required training during the period he remained attached there. Later on, the Patwari, in the words of Shri Qadiri, told that by asking him to clean and prepare 'Chilam' for his 'Hukka', he did not intend to humiliate him in any manner; as he had many others present there who would have done the job happily and voluntarily. His sole intention was to kill the ego, which according to him (the Patwari) was pre-requisite for the learners in any field of life."

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Shri Qadiri then added that new entrants to the Department, in whatever capacity they may be, should learn a lesson from that story and shun their ego, if they really intend to learn, and also added that learning is a continuous process, especially while working in Revenue Department. At the same time, he very regretfully said that times had changed. In his own words, "Now a days, learning has become a thing of the past. New entrants, especially those who join as officers, feel that they know everything. Not to speak of going to or consulting subordinates, they even hesitate to consult their old colleagues in the Department, and according to him that was very unfortunate."

He was one among the officers of those times, who had minute information about the working of his subordinates and would not hesitate in projecting positive as well as negative aptitudes of concerned officers while writing their Annual Performance Reports. In this connection, a retired Revenue Officer recounts an interesting story. According to him, in the month of November, early seventies of the twentieth century, he was promoted as Tehsildar and posted in one of the toughest as also an important Tehsils of the old District Jammu. It was a period when implementation of Agrarian Reforms (Under earlier Act titled Agrarian Reforms Act, 1972) used to be the top priority. For certain local reasons the Tehsilar had also to remain busy in handling frequent law and order problems, besides attending to Revenue/ Agrarian Reforms work. So, he had to work very hard; and on the whole situation remained under control. S. A. S. Qadiri was the then Financial Commissioner. In the 'Annual Performance Report' of the officer under reference, the Financial Commissioner had remarked, which were advertently or in-advertently conveyed to him, as under;

"Being a beginner, he could not assert to the degree he should have as Territorial Tehsilar. However, in due course of time he is likely to be a competent Revenue Officer."

Said retired officer consulted many colleagues as well as some seniors to ascertain, whether the remarks were adverse, and whether needed to be responded or not. Although there were divergent views; some termed the remarks to be adverse but majority opined that the remarks were of advisory nature, to be taken as proverbial "carrot before the cart", in order to induce subordinate officer to work hard in future. The officer later did not look back, worked very hard and earned a good reputation. Besides holding prestigious postings in his own Department, he was posted as Head of Department outside Revenue Department at least on three important assignments; and retired in the highest grade

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available to State Civil Servants at the time of his retirement i.e. Special Scale of Kashmir Administrative Service (K.A.S.). The point to be impressed here is that how keenly Shri Qadiri used to observe working of his subordinates and did not believe in simply writing excellent , good or adverse remarks in 'Annual Performance Reports' of subordinate officers in a routine manner. Quite surprisingly, in the case referred to above, he had virtually predicted future of the said subordinate officer.

S.A.S. Qadiri retired from Government service in the year 1977, i.e. more than forty years back, and it is astonishing that people still recall his administrative abilities. In the year 2014, when Srinagar city was hit by a worst tragedy of flash flood in river Jhelum; for few days administrative machinery was at a loss to act appropriately. Those days, the prominent Daily News Paper of Kashmir, 'Greater Kashmir' in its October 3, 2014 edition carried an Article, at its editorial page titled, 'Tragedy of Errors', and is said to have been contributed by a serving officer who was part of the administrative set up at that time, who had wished to be anonymous. The Article was highly critical of the way the flood situation was handled, but at the same time author of the article did not fail to recall few stalwarts of Kashmir, of course, purportedly with a view to compare administrative capabilities of officers of the times of yore with those in the present set up. A relevant excerpt from the Article is reproduced hereunder:-

"..... Kashmir has a history of having some superb and dignified officers who made a mark. Peer Ghulam Hassan Shah and S.A.S. Qadiri, to name a few. But what I was witnessing was a bunch of yes-boss type dignified clerks devoid of any decisive manner or creative approach to solve problems. And many of them seemed quite blank on issues confronting people. A Head of Department, for example, did not know, off hand, the number of beneficiary families for supplies in his Department. All he was saying was that his records have been damaged. The other day the officers (I mean the senior engineers) reported that water was not receding despite using pumps. These engineers were supposed to provide the solutions but here they were seeking advice on a petty technical matter! ....."

What a tribute to an exceptional person?

Shri E. N. Mangat Rai is known to be the one among the last I. C. S. Officers of the country. At the same time, he was first I. C. S. Officer to be posted as Chief Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir State (3/1964 to 6/1967). He has authored a book titled, "Commitment My Style"

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depicting his life time experiences. While penning down his experiences with reference to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, at page 255 of the book he has described as under: -

"There was no lack of talent among local officers who, given greater opportunity and exposure, could go very far. Particularly resilient in wits and arrangements were, S.A.S. Qadiri I.A.S., now Financial Commissioner, and Abdul Khaliq Malik, Deputy Commissioner in my time of Udhampur and later Baramulla."

Again, a fine piece of tribute to S. A. S. Qadiri in particular.

Shri Amit Kushari, a Jammu and Kashmir State Cadre I.A.S. Officer, who retired in the cadre of Financial Commissioner, in an Article titled, "Bureaucrats of Yesteryears", published in Daily Excelsior dated 2nd August, 2013 has also made a reference about Shri Qadiri in the following words: -

"When I look back at those years when I had started my service in Jammu & Kashmir, memories of many once powerful bureaucrats of the State come vividly to my mind. ..... . Those days S.A.S. Qadri Financial Commissioner was a very powerful bureaucrat of Jammu & Kashmir."

When S. A. S. Qadiri passed away in the month of September 2018, some tweets read as under: -

i. **Shri Yousef Jameel in his 2nd October tweet:**
"Legendary Bureaucrat S. A. S. Qadiri has passed away"

ii. **Ahmed Ali Fayyaz in his 2nd October tweet:**

"S.A.S. Qadiri passed away at the age of 98 today. Rest in peace, for years saw him take daily evening walk in Rajbagh. Heard a lot about this high profile, but unassuming bureaucrat, during School days, who had retired as Divisional Commissioner Kashmir. Very few of that lot living."

iii. **Mian Manzoor Ahmad:**

"May Allah grant him Janat ul Firdous. He was affectionate, disciplined and strict bureaucrat. His contribution to the State is organised Ration Cards."

Similarly, some local News Papers published from Kashmir paid tribute to S.A.S Qadiri in the following manner;

i. **Kashmir Horizon' "Srinagar/Oct, 3**

"A veteran local IAS Officer and former Divisional Commissioner

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Kashmir Syed Ahmad Sayeed Qadri passed away Tuesday night at his Srinagar residence."

ii. **Kashmir Life'**

"Kashmir's oldest serving bureaucrat Sayed Ahmad Sayed Qadri passed away. He breathed his last at his Rajbagh residence and was laid to rest in their ancestral cemetery; family sources said Qadri was 98. He was aged, but not so unwell. People who knew him said he was a capable Administrator."

iii. **Sachnews Jammu Kashmir: Srinagar, October 02:**

"Syed Ahmad Syeed Qadri, retired IAS officer and former Financial Commissioner passed away after brief illness at his residence at Rajbagh Srinagar this evening at 4.30 pm, family sources told Sachnews Jammu Kashmir. The deceased was father in law of Mehmood ur Rahman (I.A.S.), former Home Secretary of J & K state and Salahudin Salaria former Chief Conservator of Forest Department Jammu and Kashmir. Sayed Ahmed Syeed Qadri Sahib was one of the most towering officers; Jammu and Kashmir has ever produced. His standing as an officer and a human being par excellence is part of official folklore, Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Deputy. Commissioner, Srinagar said."

Besides, as per personal knowledge as also information gathered from persons who remained closely associated with Shri Qadiri; it is well known that he was a tall handsome person of good bearing with imposing demeanour. All through his life he was well attired and a regular morning walker. His habits were very simple and clean, and during the last fifty years of his life he was a vegetarian. He was a person who grew up with his feet planted firmly on the ground and remained resolutely and steadfastly down to earth till his last.

Shri Qadiri had often held more than one assignment at a time; few instances as follows:-

i. **Government Order No. 92-Gr of 1971 dated 1-11-1971.**

The following appointments, postings and transfers are ordered with immediate effect:-

1. Shri S.A.S. Qadri, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir to be Financial Commissioner including Land Reforms and Consolidation of Holdings and ex-officio Secretary to Government, Revenue Department. He will continue to work as Chief Electoral Officer.

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ii. Government order No. 33-GR of 1974 (Published in Government Gazette dated 7th November 1974.)

The following postings and transfers are ordered:-

(1) Shri S. A. S. Qadiri, I.A.S. Financial Commissioner to be Chairman of the Committee on Essential Supplies, in which capacity Shri Qadiri will co-ordinate the work of Secretaries and Heads of Departments concerned with essential commodities, such as food grains, sugar, kerosene oil and other petroleum products, firewood, iron and steel, cement, tyres etc.

Besides being Financial Commissioner and Chairman of the above Committee, Shri Qadiri will continue to hold charge as Land Reforms Commissioner, Chief Electoral Officer and Secretary to Government, Relief and Rehabilitation Department. He will relinquish the charge of Revenue Department.

Mohamad Aslam Qureshi a retired Revenue Officer, known for his qualities of head and heart, has shared sweet memories about Shri Qadiri in the following words;

"In human lives, it sometimes happens when a man takes a break from his day to day monotonous life and tries to get back into one's past to reflect and re-evaluate as to how life has been spiraling out with what achievements or lack of it and short comings including varied crisis and challenges one might have faced during the time gone by. And there are some people whose lives become a subject of intense analysis after they leave this world. On hearing about the sad demise of Shri S.A.S. Qadiri that took place at Srinagar recently I was also left with a sad feeling to remember him in the light of a few meetings I had with that great man.

"I particularly remember my first meeting with him during the year 1973 when he was the Financial Commissioner cum Revenue Secretary. I had sought an appointment to see him in his office as a K.A.S. probationer. At the appointed time of our meeting, I presented myself in his office; soon afterwards I was led into his chamber by his P.A. The moment I entered his room, I was mesmerised to see the ambiance of his office. I saw Shri Qadiri sitting in his chair and before him, there was a large imposing table. Wearing specks of big black colour frame, he was looking an awesome persona and looked like a Giant! He asked me to take a seat and without exchanging any pleasantries started talking in a businesslike manner. His first question was as to what brought me there in his office; he was perhaps under an impression that I had some problem sought to be sorted out at his level. I humbly responded to inform him

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that there was no problem as such, and I was there only to wish him well with a hope that hence afterwards I could meet him frequently in connection with matters related to probation and would seek his advice on matters pertaining to administration whenever such a need would arise.

"After enquiring about my background, education and environment, Shri Qadiri started delivering a lecture dilating on various aspects of governance and the role of a civil servant. His discourse on the subject was all illuminating and instructive. He took me virtually into another world of idealism explaining the mission of human being coming into this world and to pursue different courses of human existence including self-analysis and self realisation to advance the good of the society. He asserted that we are ushering into the era of a democracy, and the democracy is an idea to which elected representatives are wedded to promote the cause of public good with assured assistance of bureaucracy. He added that as a civil servant, our role is to guide the political leadership to work within the frame work of laws and rules, as also to help leadership in framing policies concerning planning and development of the State. Thus, according to him, there was need to bear in mind that existence of a democratic Government is to ensure justice and equity to all without any consideration of caste, creed, religion and region. He emphasised the need to stay determined, pursue one's dreams and never let anybody tell you that you cannot get there."

Mohamad Aslam got very much impressed and termed him wise and courageous after hearing the discourse from Shri Qadiri; impact of same could be well observed by those who know Aslam closely for his positive approach in dealing with problems, particularly involving human sufferings. With that background, and having remained associated with Shri Qadiri even during his post retirement period, Mohamad Aslam had shared some more details about him (Shri Qadiri) in the following words;

"His attitude in administration was recognisably as that of a pragmatist rich in wisdom. He was a self-made person who did not borrow anything substantial in learning the art of governance from his earlier generation in administration. His personal experience with people and events in life made him master to cope up with varied challenging situations in life. He learned everything from the people in field. Learning from field experience requires active listening; a basic understanding, empathy and a certain mind set and Shri Qadiri had these attributes in abundance.

"When he came into the State service the real architect in

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administration were usually the Pandits besides a few others from outside the State. His continued journey in administration after 1949 was even more remarkable. The new democratic leadership of our State at that time was highly satisfied from his contributions as one of the senior administrators. Right from the start till the height of his administrative career he remained very conscious and alive to the fact that he was there to contribute to the best of his ability and worked honestly towards welfare of the State. He was one among very few bureaucrats who were instrumental to promote the political outlook of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Kh. G.M. Sadiq, the two erstwhile Prime Ministers of the State, during a very difficult period of turbulence and transition. Many a times it was seen, while attending high level meetings with other senior officers, the presence of other officer used to fade like shadow in his presence. The officers were like R.K. Takkar, P.N. Khanna, C.B. Budgugger, Tayab Jee, Ashok Jaitley, Mehmood-ur-Rehman and Kh. Noor Mohammad; they were mostly new entrants and less accentuated. Being much senior, Shri Qadiri used to be heard with attention; his grasp on all important sectors of State administration was remarkable and was always taken seriously."

Again, according to Aslam, Shri Qadiri had his own sense of dignity and integrity which was in-alienable. Without people around him, he did not feel lonely but at the same time he had stamina and aptitude to stay by himself. Although he was only a bureaucrat and not a politician; but he usually knew, what was happening in the Government, more than what others knew. The civil servant, it is said, is at best a master of the short-term solution. But that was not true with Shri Qadiri; he was a man with vision which could look into future and was always satisfied with solutions that endured. He was a shrewd man of knowledge who knew the intricacies involved in the functioning of a democratic Government. He came to the scene in the Government at a very crucial period; when our State was slowly and gradually experiencing a climate of re-construction and resurgence. At that time, there were hardly a dozen of stalwarts in the administration, like S/Shri Kidwai, K.G. Syedain. Gh. Ahmed, R.K. Takkar, P.N. Khanna, Noor Mohammad and A.N. Dhar etc. on whose shoulders lied the onerous of responsibility of creative planning of the State. Among these veterans, Qadiri never allowed any one to outshine him in competence, reliability, honesty and commitment to contribute substantively to ensure the welfare of the State. Aslam, while concluding his impressions about Shri Qadiri; further adds that all along, he followed approach of decentralisation in administration for speedy development and to allow his junior officers to have full opportunity to

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utilise their fullest potential of ability and competence. He had a firm belief that less you manage the better results you get from your team with a proviso to ensure periodic inspection, control and proper delivery mechanism - of course with an occasional dose of over-sight as also encouragement from seniors.

Aslam feels proud in sharing an episode exhibiting the saga of valour and moral strength on the part of Shri Qadiri that occurred at the fag end of his life. According to Aslam, during the September 2014 flood that devastated entire Srinagar city, Rajbagh area, having residential house of Shri Qadiri, was the hardest hit. Like many others, he was trapped and remained unheard of and uncared for, for three consecutive days. He never asked for help and was without food and water. After sometime, when water started receding, people visited his house to presumably, collect his dead body, as Social Workers / Volunteers were told to see whether he was alive or dead. To their utter surprise they found him well and kicking although he was suffering from phenomena. He was shifted to a Nursing Home, where he got treatment for few days and came back to home unperturbed.

The event reveals, as to what a strong will power and fine sense of self-respect Shri Qadiri possessed of as also exhibited even at the time of extreme crisis; and that too at the ripe age of ninety-five years- unparallel and unheard of.



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S. A. QAYUM

Amongst the officers chosen to be covered by the writer of the book, the name of S. A. Qayum figured in top few of the list, because the latter had very sweet memories about the officer. But the problem was that the former had left for his heavenly abode more than twenty years back. It was felt difficult to develop a story on the basis of memory after lapse of such a long period. Although I had family relations with him but unfortunately, with the passage of time meetings became less frequent and the relations though remained cordial, but existed only to the exchange of greetings on festivals especially on the Eid.

One day, when sitting with Shri Rajinder Singh Parihar and discussing the subject, he suggested contacting Syed Shabeer the elder son of S. A. Qayum. He was confident that Shabeer with Media back ground might be of considerable help in the matter. The suggestion actually proved to be fruit full. Shabeer when contacted informed that long back he had recorded a talk with his late father touching all the issues concerning his life including his experiences and impressions with regard to the working of the Revenue Department in particular, when he was with the Door Darshan. According to him the talk was telecast as well; but at the same time, to my dismay, he informed that the cassette got damaged few years back making it un-audible. He, however, assured that he, and his younger brother S. A. Mujtaba, would sit together some time and try to develop a story which may serve the purpose. There was no alternative but to wait. But hardly half an hour had passed; when Shabeer called back informing that luckily his son had saved the recording in his system, which he was ready to share. So, based on the talk recorded more than twenty years back, some more information gathered during personal discussions with family members of Shri S.A. Qayum and his colleagues, besides personal memory, various pieces have been put together and the story has been developed.

Sayed Abdul Qayum commonly known as S. A. Qayum; but popularly called by his well-wishers Qayum Sahib not only in Revenue Department but in almost all the Departments with which Revenue

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Department comes in touch with; be it Civil, Military or Police that too in all the three regions of the State. Interestingly, although his forefathers belonged to Kashmir valley, he was born and brought up at Leh (Ladakh), but built a house and settled at Jammu. He also served in various capacities, in all the three regions of the State. That may be the reason as to why he had started his recorded interview with following words: -

"Change is the law of nature"

It is said that his father, Syed Mohammad Sayeed, got appointed as Persian Teacher in Government School at Leh. He was also 'MEER WAIZ' Ladakh and remained Imam of Grand Mosque Leh as well. Being a Teacher as well as Meer Waiz he commanded good respect among locals, Muslims in particular. So, he decided to settle at Leh, built a house and spent his whole life there. Among other members of his family, elder brother of Shri Qayum, Sayed Abdul Bari also joined service in the Revenue Department and retired as Assistant Commissioner, whereas Bari sahib's son (grandson of Syed Mohammad Sayeed) namely, Iftikhar-ul-Hussnain retired as Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal (Kashmir).

Before proceeding further on the subject matter, it would be in place to make a brief mention about Ladakh. It becomes all the more necessary, in view of the fact that writer of the book also had the privilege of working there. I served there as Tehsildar Leh from 08-09-1975 to 13-10-1977. During those days whole of Ladakh comprised one District with three Sub-divisions at Kargil, Nubra and Nyuma. While the then Kargil Sub-division (now District Kargil) had two Tehsils, Kargil and Zanskar, rest of the District (the present District Ladakh) with two Sub-divisions i.e. Nubra and Nyuma formed part of Tehsil Leh. During those days Tehsildar Leh, in addition to his own duties as Tehsildar used to be ex-officio Chairman of the Notified Area Committee Leh, Excise and Taxation Officer Leh, District Treasury Officer and Superintendent District Stationery Depot. When my posting order as Tehsildar Leh was issued -- which was a posting on own request -- I did call on Qayum sahib for his blessings and guidance, and the latter besides welcoming my posting to Leh, mentioned a long list of do's and don'ts, which really proved to be very helpful during my stay at Leh. Under the circumstances stated above, I had plenty of occasions to visit almost every corner of Ladakh including, of course, Kargil, and am in a position to express views about Ladakh in an authoritative way.

Ladakh, the northern-most region of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, is termed as a land of great historical importance. Ladakh, known as the land of high passes, besides being one of the most sparsely

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populated regions is the highest plateau in the country, with much of it being over 3,000 m above the sea level. Ladakh is also known as the cold desert; it remains cut off from rest of the country on account of blockade of the only two connecting-434-km Srinagar-Leh and 490-km Manali-Leh highways, for months together, due to heavy snowfall along the high passes. The region is geographically isolated with an inhospitable terrain. It is situated in the Indus Valley region, south of Karakuram within the complex network of Himalayan Mountains, and currently extends from the Siachen Glacier in the Karakoram Range to the main Great Himalayas to the south. As on 15th August 1947, the total geographical area of the region was 96.701 sq. Kms., of which approximately one third is under the illegal occupation of China and Pakistan, while the rest i.e. area 59196 sq. kms constitutes the existing area of the region. As per Census of 2011, total population of the region is 2, 74,289 souls with population density as 4.6 /sq. Km.

During the pre-Independence era, Ladakh (excluding Frontier Area of Gilgit) was directly administered through Wazir-Wazarat. It had three Tehsils, based at Leh, Skardu and Kargil. During those days there was a practice of shifting the headquarters of the Wazarat from Leh to Skardu for six months of the year. After Independence, whole of the existing area formed one District comprising two Tehsils namely, Leh and Kargil; and it became part of Kashmir Division of the State of Jammu and Kashmir for administrative purposes. Later on, however, Zanskar was carved out of old Kargil Tehsil, as the third Tehsil of the District. In the year 1979, the District was bifurcated into two Districts of Leh and Kargil. With the major re-organisation of administrative units in the State, in the year 2014, the two Districts have got more Sub-divisions and Tehsils. According to SROs No: 450 and 451 both dated 21-09-2014, the detail of administrative units is as under;

S.No.	District	Sub-divisions	Tehsils
1.	Leh	Durbuk, Khalsi, Kharu, Likir, Nubra and Nyoma.	Diskit,Durbuk, Khalsi, Kharu, Leh, Nyoma, Saspol and Sumoor.
2.	Kargil	Drass, Sankoo, Shakar Chiktan and Zanskar.	Drass, Kargil, Sankoo, Shakar-Chiktan, Shergole, Taisuru and Zanskar.

The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil. Leh and Kargil Districts each have their own locally elected Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils with some control over local policy matters

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and utilisation of development funds. Besides, in pursuance of SRO-110 of 2019 dated 08-02 2019, Ladakh was upgraded to be a separate Revenue /Administrative Division of the State.

Ladakh has got a lot of potential as also attraction for tourists including the foreigners. For strategic reasons Ladakh remained a restricted area till the year 1974, when it was opened for tourists. Leh is now a hub of tourism, for foreign tourists who get attracted by vast bare desert plains and mountains. The region is also known for spiritual tourism, particularly on the eve of various Bhudist celebrations - 'Hemis Gunpa Festival' being the one on top of the list; when colourful religious ceremonies are performed in the midst of large gatherings. Among various famous tourist spots in the region, there are a number of fresh water lakes and hot springs located in the eastern part of Ladakh, namely, Pang kong Lake, Spanggur Lake, Tsomo-Riri Lake, Tshokar "Kar-tso" Lake, Hanio-Tso Lake and hot springs at Puga of Changthang area spread over a length of 3.22 Kms in the bed of a rivulet called Rulangchhu.

Narrative about Ladakh would be incomplete without a mention of its history of becoming part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and of course, the famous 'Basti Haveli' of Leh town. Ladakh first became part of Jammu Raj in the year 1842 (A.D.), and later became part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir in 1846 (A.D.) during the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh. During the initial periods, the region was administered through an administrative head known as 'Thanedar', who enjoyed both civil and military powers. First such administrator was Mangal Thanedar, who was followed by Mehta Basti Ram in the year 1847. Mehta Basti Ram is known for initiating steps to establish minor Cottage Industry and a Sheep/Goat Farm, with a view to provide gainful employment to the local population, thereby boosting local economy. He is credited with raising a huge administrative building in the town of Leh, part of which was used as Government granary (storage), while the other part used to be utilised as the residence of the Thanedar; and came to be fondly known after his name, as 'Basti Haveli'. A fine example of mixed Dogra and Ladakhi Architecture; in fact, it was a majestic building in the town with a grand entrance called 'Deodi'. It was a two-storey building with a large number of rooms in the first floor, while ground floor was meant to accommodate servants, cattle and family winter stores, with vast open space to serve as lawn. With the passage of time, when the administrative set up got changed, 'Basti Haveli' came to be reserved as official residence of the Tehsildar Leh. Earlier, a large chunk of adjoining land was also attached with the building to be used as Garden. Of late the garden part was converted into residential plots and allotted to various local families,

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besides reserving some portion for community purposes. Now, even the old structure has been demolished, although a new building consisting of few rooms has been constructed in its place to be used as residence of the local Tehsildar. However, entrance (Deodi) part is still intact and attracts many tourists.

I happened to have occupied the building for a period of more than two years (8/1975 to 10/1977), when I was posted as Tehsildar Leh. It was a huge complex comprising a large number of compact, spacious, and airy rooms, built of local sun-dried bricks and deodar wood used in roofs; with some rooms having big deodar logs of full medium size trees. In view of my limited requirements, I, as also my predecessors, had been occupying only two-three rooms, a spacious kitchen with a small glass room, whereas rest of the accommodation on first floor remained unutilised. For the reason of reaming abandoned for years together, the unutilised rooms had become not worthy of residence. However, during my tenure of posting, family of one S. Harbhajan Singh, who happened to be posted as Headquarter Assistant (Tehsildar) with the District Development Commissioner Leh, was also accommodated in few rooms in the said complex, after getting suitably renovated.

Besides, Shri Qayum, would often describe Ladakh to be known for its cultural ethics and traditions. According to him, discipline formed core of the Ladakihi society in general. In old days, elders would teach their children as also would expect from them observance of strict discipline in every sphere of life, including how to drink water. Respect to elders in particular and respectful speaking manners in general are other striking features of Ladakhi culture. Even at home, if one has to address a family servant one may call him by name but to be suffixed by Abba or Kaga (father/brother) depending upon his age. While talking to someone, one has to be very polite, humble and respectful. Mercifully, these traditions still exist in Ladakh even now.

Born on 27th January 1931, S. A. Qayum had his schooling at Leh from first to ninth standard, because in those days Leh had only a Lower High School, which according to him was up graded from Middle to Lower High School only the year he passed the Middle standard examination. There after he left for Srinagar for further studies. While he was studying in 2nd year in College at Srinagar, he had to leave the studies due to disturbances in the State. Due to the disturbances, Ladakh, in particular the Kargil area also got badly affected and at one stage enemy was away from Leh hardly by twenty kilometers. Compelled by the circumstances, many people and among them many employees deserted. Thus, there

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became available some vacancies in various Government Departments, and he got an opportunity to be appointed as a Teacher in the Education Department in the first instance. After some time, he was appointed as a Patwari and then as Girdawar as a temporary arrangement. It was the year 1949, when both the Prime Minister of India as also the Prime Minister of the State visited Ladakh. People while meeting the high dignitaries, among other things, projected the demand of un-employment in the region. At that time, only two educated persons were available there, including S. A. Qayum and the other was a Buddhist gentleman, who was older than former and was intermediate pass. As per on the spot orders, while the Budhist man was appointed as a B.D.O. the former was sent to Revenue Training School Srinagar for receiving training as Naib Tehsildar and this way his formal journey in Revenue Department began. However, while in service he did his Graduation from Jammu University and thus fulfilled a long-cherished dream of completing his studies successfully - which had got disrupted for reasons beyond his control.

Later on, after successfully completing the training, he was appointed as Naib Tehsildar at Kargil, Bandipore and Baramulla in succession. At the very young age of 24 years he was promoted as Tehsildar, which was very rare during those days. He served as Tehsildar at Rajouri and Mendhar for three and a half years at each place. As per his own words, he enjoyed both the postings very much. But he made a special mention of his posting at Rajouri, rather he had termed that as a 'SUNEHARI DOUR' (golden period) of his professional life. It would be in place to point out that during those days Rajouri was a Tehsil of the combined Poonch-Rajouri District. That was the place where he had to work very hard, but at the same time he commanded good respect among civilians, Army as well as his seniors in the administrative set up. Referring to Army, he recalled that at that time the famous General Bikram Singh was his counterpart as Divisional Commander stationed at Rojouri, whom he termed as a 'KHUBSEERT ARMY PERSONNEL' (finest Army personality) They had very cordial relations; rather he had said that he learnt a lot from him. Quoting an instance, he once mentioned an important event that occurred during his posting as Tehsildar Rajouri. It was the year 1957, when at one point of time Rajouri reached at almost starvation stage, as due to some damage to the bridge on river Chenab at Akhnoor, supply line got disrupted, as in those days there was no alternate transport route. But, when help was sought in the matter from Army, General Bikram Singh extended the help with open arms and it was due to the concern shown and helping hand extended by him that the situation could be

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handled in a positive way. While civilian authorities arranged transportation of ration up to left bank of river Chenab, Army vehicles would transport the same up to Rajouri. This way a grave situation was handled with positivity and ease. Concluding his remarks on the event, S. A. Qayum expressed his gratitude towards General Bikram Singh in the following words;

"MEHARBANI UNHON NE KEE, NAM MERA HUA"
"(He did the gratitude, I got the credit)"

This episode is an indicator that how keeping cordial relations between various wings of the administration are important and can be help full in handling even grave situations like the one mentioned above; and a good Revenue Officer is supposed as also expected to possess these qualities.

When once asked if his becoming Tehsildar at a young age did not come in way of performing his duties in effective manner or dealing with rural population, he replied that it depends upon individual temperament of each officer. Some people even in advance age could not adjust themselves with common people, while others when given the chance even at young age prove their worth by adjusting themselves in the atmosphere/circumstances they are put in. It is not at all bad to get such opportunities in young age; rather acquiring experience in young age helps one in delivering, in a better way, on higher postings. If a young officer is sympathetic towards problems of common man, and has got strong desire to learn and work hard, he would definitely get proper guidance and support from his superiors.

When promoted to next higher scale, S. A. Qayum was posted as Assistant Commissioner Poonch, Collector Land Acquisition Uri Hydro Electric Project and Settlement Officer Consolidation of Holdings Jammu. Among these postings, last one was the most challenging as the scheme itself was a revolutionary step to give a boost to the agrarian based economy of the State. In fact, on his posting as Settlement Officer Consolidation in the year 1968, he picked me up to be posted as his 'Peshi Qanungo' and that was the start of our official connection, which later developed into family relations as well. The Consolidation of Holdings was earlier too tried to be implemented in the State in the year 1961, but had to be withdrawn, most likely on account of onslaught of 1962 war. I had remained associated with the scheme on both the occasions This time the Consolidation of Holdings operation was re- taken up by the State Government in Kulgam Tehsil of Kashmir Division while in Jammu Division, part Tehsil Jammu and part Tehsil R. S. Pura i.e. Bishnah area, (as

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at time Bishnah formed part of old Tehsil R. S. Pura) were selected by the Government to be covered. The work started around April 1968 and remained in progress till close of year 1971, when firstly the work got affected immediately with start of Indo-Pak war of 1971. Later on, with the en-block transfer of me and whole staff of my Niabat to Chicken's Neck area (Pakistani area captured by our Army during war) for quick measurement, and then piece meal transfer of remaining staff as well to other places, the consolidation work came to a standstill. But it would be worth mention that this time lot of progress was achieved. Both in Kashmir as well as in Jammu Divisions a number of villages were de-notified only after achieving the target. In those villages possession was handed over to the Tenure Holders after consolidating their holdings as per provisions of the Consolidation of Holdings Act and the most important feature of the progress achieved was that not only senior officers in the Revenue Department, including the then Financial Commissioner and the then Revenue Minister had publicly appreciated the effort, but even the affected people (zamindars) were more than satisfied. The success in the State can be attributed to the team of officers and officials selected in handling the operations and so far as Jammu Division is concerned the credit goes to head of the team i.e. S. A. Qayum and the associate Rajinder Singh Parihar, who was his 2nd in command, being posted as Tehsildar Consolidation of Holdings in Jammu, for most of the period. The most striking feature of their work culture was a team spirit among the officers working, never seen anywhere else. To be more elaborate, if Settlement Officer Consolidation was to visit a Niabat, Tehsildar Consolidation would be necessary part of the team. When appeals against orders passed by a Naib Tehsildar Consolidation were to be disposed of, all the three i.e. Settlement Officer Consolidation, Tehsildar Consolidation and the Naib Tehsildar Consolidation would sit together to find out workable solutions to the grievances of the aggrieved parties. Similar procedure would be adopted when the cases would be disposed of at the Settlement Officer's level. This way the number of appeals to be filed with next higher authority i.e. Director Consolidation of Holdings - particularly in Jammu chapter - became negligible, which attracted appreciation from higher authorities.

Besides being one of the pioneers of the team culture, as detailed above, another rare quality with this officer was that he liked discipline and would encourage his subordinates by appreciating their sincere efforts in performing official duties. In this context it would be appropriate to quote an instance. As indicated earlier, writer of the book was working as Peshi Qanungo in the office of Settlement Officer

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Consolidation of Holdings and in the month of August, 1968 he was promoted as Naib Tehsildar to be posted in District Jammu. On hearing of the promotion, the Settlement Officer Consolidation tried to get the transfer order modified. At that time, he did not succeed and relieved the official from his Wing with following remarks recorded in his own hand in Service Book of the outgoing subordinate;

"Sh. Gupta is Billari trained like many others, but he has a trained mind -- trained to behave, trained to work hard, trained to be sincere and obedient. I had tried my best that after his promotion as Naib Tehsildar, he could be with me as Assistant Consolidation Officer. Knows revenue work in the field more than any of his colleagues, knows office work satisfactorily-and that is natural, because he works hard.

"The greatest quality in him is that he is very punctual, so much so that I was prompted to say -'Virender! Thy name is punctuality."

N.B:

i. Billari is a small town near Moradabad in U.P., where a regular Training Institute for Consolidation of Holdings run by U.P. Government was located. In the year 1961, sixty-three officers and officials from Jammu & Kashmir State were got trained in Consolidation of Holdings. That was the first and last batch deputed from Jammu and Kashmir State.

ii. Within two months of the transfer on promotion, with the efforts of S. A. Qayum the Settlement Officer Consolidation, I was got transferred back in Consolidation of Holdings Wing and posted as Assistant Consolidation Officer Tehsil R. S. Pura.

iii. At initial stage of the start of Consolidation of Holdings program the designation of officers used to be Consolidation Officer and Assistant Consolidation Officer, which were later on, by virtue of an amendment in the Consolidation of Holdings Act 1961, changed to Tehsildar Consolidation and Naib Tehsildar Consolidation respectively.

As regards his experience on higher postings; S. A. Qayum remained posted as Deputy Commissioner in four Districts. He was the first Deputy Commissioner of Kupwara, when Kupwara was up graded as a new District in Kashmir Division in the year 1978. Besides, he also served as Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Kathua and Doda Districts in Jammu Division. He always believed in hard work. With reference to qualities of an officer, in wining good will of the public, while working at that level, he

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would often fondly mention that when people have faith that a particular officer means business and has got positive approach and sympathetic attitude towards solving their genuine problems, they are with you in any situation; irrespective of the religious affinity of either side. Besides, if people come to know that the officer is well intentioned, they would tolerate even if you are harsh on occasions.

About his experiences in respect of District Poonch, where he had worked in various capacities, he was fond of saying that in those days the District comprised from Sunderbani to Poonch, and he served in that District as Tehsildar Mendhar and Rajouri, Assistant Commissioner Poonch (two terms) and then as Deputy Commissioner. In all; the period comes to around twelve years. According to him, the people of the District are generally poor but they are very fine, simple, and sincere, who really understand what sincerity is. Despite the difficulties, that they always faced with being a border District, they are generally law abiding and give due respect to the authorities. He would further recall that he received lot of love and affection from them and despite his having retired from Government service, people from Poonch District would frequently come **to simply meet him.**

When asked about difficulties faced by him or difficult situation in his service career, he once recalled that the period between years 1967-68 to 1975 was a bit stressful for two reasons, one that his three children were studying. Due to his being busy in far flung areas like, Poonch, Gool Gulabgarh and Uri etc. he was not in a position to give due attention to their problems, besides facing financial and physical stress and second that in service, sometimes one has to face people with different mentalities. Without naming any one, he said that one or two such persons (Officers) did try to create hurdles and problems in his service career. But, he added that at the same time there were people (Officers); including for instance General Bikram Singh, who showered great love and affection on him. Referring to one such officer on civil side, he mentioned that he even did not know where he lived. Only once the officer had come on tour to Rajouri, where he didn't take even a glass of water from his hands, but he would love him like his son. The attitude of the Officer left a long-lasting imprint in his mind and he continued to remember that for a long - long time. He identified the officer as the then Commissioner Jammu Province, Kanwar Narinder Singh. (In those days the Provincial head of Revenue Department was known as Commissioner).

About other personalities who impressed him in his service career, he had once mentioned that on administration side Bakhashi

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Ghulam Mohamad the then Prime Minister of State really influenced him to a great extent. He would reach places even in remote areas, possessed wonderful power of remembering/re-collecting things and would conduct frequent tours. His way of meeting the people and his willingness plus aptitude to solve their genuine problems was commendable; which of course, created a deep-rooted impact on his mind. Then there were officers within Revenue Department itself, who according to him, knew how to teach and they were deeply desirous that young officers should learn their job. He identified one such officer as S. Pritam Singh the then Settlement Officer Rajouri. He not only gave Qayum the work but ensured that proper training is also imparted to the young man in Settlement work. Similarly, he was quite impressed from the sympathetic attitude, as also the working style of Ch. Bharat Bhushan the then Divisional Commissioner, Jammu. He termed him as an extremely intelligent Officer; further adding that greatest quality of Ch. Bharat Bhushan was that he not only knew how to work hard but how to make others work hard, and he (S.A. Qayum) had learnt a lot from him. Finally, he made a mention of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah. It was mid-seventies of the previous century - a period, when Sheikh Sahib was Chief Minister for the 2nd term and S. A. Qayum was posted in Srinagar Municipality, which was totally a new experience of his service career. He remained posted there for a period of around three and a half years and did a lot in improving basic civic amenities of the city, in his capacity first as the Executive Officer and later as Administrator of Srinagar Municipality. According to him, that was the period when Sheikh Sahib would give special attention towards developmental activities. He was very particular in making a mention that those were the times when officers had a sense of fear of his persona as the Chief Minister.

In the backdrop of Shri Qayum's reminiscences about some personalities; mentioned here-in-before, it would be useful to recollect that S. Pritam Singh, was also one of the finest Revenue officers of his times. He joined his career in Revenue Department as Naib Tehsildar and then promoted as Tehsildar. In mid-fifties of the previous century, he was first posted as Special Revenue Officer at Rajouri and when the area was taken up for Settlement work, he was posted as Settlement Officer a prestigious/selection posting in the Revenue Department. After retirement he started practising in Revenue Courts, rather he was the pioneer among retired Revenue Officers to start practice post retirement, and became one among the most sought-after advocates of that time. Many old Revenue Officers used to visit him often to update their

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knowledge about Land Revenue Laws and matters which the former would gladly clarify.

During the period S. A. Qayum was posted in Srinagar Municipality, I was functioning as Tehsildar Leh, and besides his main assignments as Tehsildar, was the Chairman of the Notified Area Committee, Leh as well. At the time of my joining there the predecessor in office had told that the then District Development Commissioner cum Deputy Commissioner Leh had been showing much concern about sanitation of Leh town, but in view of limited rather almost negligible resources of the Notified Area Committee much could not be done. With a view to improve the conditions, I had initiated certain steps including putting up of big drums at selected sites and purchase of wheel barrows for collection of garbage from inner lanes etc.; but there needed more to be done. The biggest problem was that in whole of Ladakh there was no professional Sweeper as a class, and locals engaged for the job did not serve the desired purpose. A plan was prepared and discussed with the District Development Commissioner, Medmood-ur-Rehman, - who can be termed as one among the finest and most popular officers who had served Ladakh. Feeling satisfied with the few steps initiated, as indicated, the District Development Commissioner gave a go ahead signal to the proposed plan. Accordingly, I went to Srinagar, since that was the winter season, journey was performed via Jammu. There a meeting was arranged with the Administrator Srinagar Municipality and with his active involvement, support and efforts; ten couples belonging to Safai-wala families were motivated to shift to Leh. The terms and conditions agreed included, wages at the rate of Rs 300/- per month per worker besides uniform and rent-free residential accommodation, etc. I recall that on arrival of the workers at Leh they were accommodated in a building hired by the Notified Area Committee. Immediately thereafter, of course with active support (financial as well as administrative) and approval of the then Development Commissioner Leh, the process for construction of a separate building adjacent to Polo Ground Leh, for housing those workers, had been initiated, before I was posted out after completion of my tenure. (By that time S. S. Rizivi had joined as new Development Commissioner and I received full support in the task from him as well). With the shifting of these professional Safai workers, and actual taking up of the job by them on ground, sanitation of Leh town really got transformed. One recalls with satisfaction that on visit of the then Minister Ladakh Affairs, Sonam Norbu (a local Minister and frequent visitor to the town), immediately after the implementation of the plan, he was highly impressed by the improvement in sanitation of the town and

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appreciated the effort very much. Although, thereafter some more efforts were taken including purchase of a Tractor and a trolley for lifting of the garbage so collected and dumping of the same at identified site outside the town etc.; but importing of professional Safai workers, in fact, was a new chapter in the developmental history and gave real boost to the effort in improving sanitation of Leh town. All this, could not have been achieved, had the personality like S.A. Qayum, in his capacity as Administrator Srinagar Municipality not taken keen interest in the process of negotiations with the prospective families to be shifted to Leh.

To a specific question, if there has been improvement or decline in the working of Revenue Department, he replied without mincing any words that, in his opinion, there had been much decline. The Department had forgotten the traditional ways and manners of preparing and up-dating revenue records; officers were not conducting touring, particularly of the remote areas, to the desired extent at all. Referring to his times, when he was a field officer, he added that Revenue Officers used to go on tour and stay outside headquarter for days together not only occasionally but as a matter of general practice. There, they would talk to people, feel their pulse, hear the grievance if any, conduct partal (checking) of records, and issue instructions for corrections wherever required. He further said, "These days, the officers do not seem to be much interested in touring. If at all they go, they are generally called back for other activities and the facilities of vehicles and telephone, which are meant for enhancing efficiency had proved counterproductive. When a Patwari has to prepare a Jamabandi of a village, which has to be revised after every four years, he has to spread a number of registers, like current Jamabandi, Register Intqalat (mutatations register), Misal Haqiat (Record of Rights), Register Girdawri, Roznamcha Waqiati and so on. Those registers are big registers and have to be kept open at a time covering a lot of space, but all that is not possible with tight pants, which the field staff generally wears". Elaborating the view point further, he said that when he was Secretary Revenue Department, he specifically took note of non-updating of revenue records and in that context issued advisory to take up Settlement work for updating revenue records, in the first instance in selected areas, then train more people there to be diverted later to other areas, so that whole of the State is covered in phased manner. Another point which he forcefully stressed upon was the training of staff. In particular he indicated that Consolidation of Holdings, which is an important scheme aimed at giving boost to agriculture production of the State, needed to be given priority in order to bring the State in line

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with other States of the country. In order to make advance in that direction training of staff is a necessary, in fact an essential factor.

With regard to his post retirement activities, he disclosed that in all he remained in Government service for a period of few months short of forty-two years, during which period many stresses and restrictions had been faced. Therefore, he wanted to live free life. Although, he was eligible for practising law in Courts, but he didn't opt for that. Instead he did restrict his activity to Chamber Practice only, where one has liberty to sit as per convenience. Besides, while one would sit in his Chamber some old friends or new entrants in Revenue Department desiring to learn would often drop in. That is enough for one to be active in life. Moreover, he added that with the grace of Almighty, his children were well placed and then there are grand children to play with. God the all-powerful has provided him all amenities of life in reasonably good quantity and he felt more than satisfied. This was entirely in line with his general character and personality.

In reply to an important question, he had once emphatically stated that in order to become a successful bureaucrat, the foremost pre-requisite is that one should be honest, but honesty need not be limited to money only, one must exhibit honesty in every respect; positive approach being another important quality. Without naming any one, he added that there are few colleague officers, who although are honest to the extent that they don't extract money, but at the same time they don't do their job honestly and have a negative approach towards life and profession; which is wrong. In public life, positive approach in dealing with grievances of general public is also another quality of a good officer. According to him team spirit is another important requirement. One should have the ability to take whole of the team along, besides treating them as part of a family. For that both lenient as well as stringent approach has to be adopted as per requirement of each occasion. As in the case of a father who, sometimes, may beat his son, but at the same time would take care of his welfare as well, similar treatment has to be given to one's subordinates. Then and then only an officer can claim to be successful. Here it would be in place to mention an event of Qayum sahib's life as mentioned by his younger son S. A. Mujtaba (I.P.S.). It was the period when S. A. Qayum was posted as Deputy Commissioner Poonch. Mujtaba as a small kid had just started going to school. One morning Mujtaba, the kid, insisted that his father should leave him to school and the father, as is expected, had to honour the wishes of the young soul. On their way to school, some employees of Revenue Department came across and they paid due respects to the Deputy

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Commissioner. When they had gone, Mujtaba enquired from his father, whether those people work under him? The father bowed down to reach the kid's ear and whispered, "No my child they work with me." As per Shri Mujtaba, he not only still remembers those words, but the same have become permanent feature of his attitude towards his subordinates.

What a fine example of compassion towards one's subordinates?

Shri Qayum lived a hard life, full of struggle and austerity, but always looking into the future with optimism. He had a humble beginning in service in Leh, Ladakh; by the sheer dint of hard work and devotion, rose to the rank of a Secretary to the Jammu and Kashmir Government. In pursuance of Government Order, no: 600-GR-1990 dated 24-05-1990, he was confirmed in Super Time Scale - the highest pay scale of those times in the State services - retrospectively w.e.f. 19-12-1983. Always regarded as an outstanding Revenue Officer and a very effective administrator; Qayum Sahib enjoyed a sterling personal reputation. He was admired by the people of all three regions - Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. As a professional he relished the love and affection of colleagues; was looked up to by subordinates for guidance and support; as also received encouragement and appreciation from the seniors, in ample measure.

What else could one ask for in life?



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SAT LAL KOUL

The name of Sat Lal Koul figures among few of those veteran Revenue Officers of Jammu and Kashmir, who have the distinction of not only having served but being popular as well in all the three regions of the State viz Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. He is the oldest among living iconic Revenue Officers whose reflections form part of this book. Born on 18th of April 1926 at Srinagar, he had a distressed childhood, as he lost his mother when he was hardly five months old. Originally his family belonged to Budgam area, where his grandfather Shri Neel Kanth Koul - a Qanungo (Girdawar) by profession, owned a whole village; which was named after him as 'Qanungo Pora'. This village is presently part of reorganised Tehsil Chadoora of District Budgam. As an aftershock of certain unfortunate events, like losing his wife and a brother, Neel Kanth Koul forsook worldly life and started living in isolation; whom later on the village folk used to respect as a Saint. After passing through troubled times, Pt Amar Chand, father of Shri Sat Lal Koul joined service in Revenue Department as a Patwari and settled at Srinagar. Pt Amar Chand had two sons, and the elder one was a patient of epilepsy (he, in fact, later died of drowning in a fit of epilepsy). Therefore, fearing that Sat Lal might not get infected, he was sent to village Killam of Kulgam area to be brought up in the care of his father's (Pt Amar Chand's) maternal family. Thus, Sat Lal Koul had his initial schooling at Government Primary School Killam and Government Middle School Anantnag. All along he remained a brilliant student and as once fondly shared by him, at least in 6th, 7th and 8th standard, while studying at Middle School Anantnag he topped in merit list of the whole District. He vividly recalls that long back when he was posted as Joint Registrar Co-operative Societies Kashmir, while on tour to Anantnag, he made it a point to visit his old School and felt delighted to find that his name existed on Honors Board of the School. Thereafter, he came back to join his father at Srinagar. He did his Matriculation with distinction from Sri Partap High School in the year 1941 and then Graduation from Sri Partap College Srinagar in the year 1945. Having done his Graduation, although he had a mind for pursuing some professional course outside Kashmir, but his father did not allow him to join any,

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because of being his only son and none other in the family. So, he joined Amar Singh College for pursuing M.A., but in view of certain unforeseen circumstances had to leave his studies mid-way and he joined short-hand and typing classes in order to add to his skills for better prospective.

Although he had many sweet and sour memories to narrate about the period he had spent during High School and College times at Srinagar, but in view to space constraints and limitations of the subject matter, it would be in place to share at least few reminiscences of Shri Koul, in his own words, as under;

i. "After passing the Middle standard when I came to Srinagar, many a times fellow students would talk among themselves about pictures and 'Talkies'. Having spent earlier period in a remote area, I knew nothing about it, and when exhibited anxiousness about it, I was advised to sometime visit a Talkies and see a picture there. So, one day, accompanied by a close friend, I went to Palladium Talkies; purchased tickets for six annas (approximately equivalent to 37 new paisa) each and we saw the picture titled 'Post Man'. It was a new thing for me and of course, I was really enthralled by the first ever experience in my life. During those day's there were only two Talkies in the city of Srinagar; the other being the 'Regal Talkies', which mostly exhibited English pictures."

ii. "My father has been a Patwari in Revenue Department. It often happened that he would keep me along while attending to his official work whether in his private office or sometimes even in the field. He would not only make me understand about working of a Patwari but would also teach reading and writing Urdu. Even at this advanced age, I still remember a few of the Urdu poems taught by him during those days.

iii. "After learning typing and short-hand, in response to an advertisement, I tried my luck in seeking employment in Army. An Officer of the rank of Brigadier (Brigadier Ghansara Singh), who tested my professional capabilities, told me that I would have to go to Gilgit (Frontier Area) and at the same time warned that the employment would be pregnant with hazards, as by that time political disturbances (Pak invasion) had stared. Since I was the only child in the family, so he advised me to stay with my father. At a much later stage of service, when I was posted as Deputy Commissioner Doda, this Brigadier happened to meet me; who told that the place where I was required to join in Gilgit in case of

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having accepted the appointment, had been captured by Pak Army and that survivals were minimal. It was further told that even he (the Brigadier) had a narrow escape from death, as he was surrounded by his own hostile subordinates who took him as prisoner and handed over to enemy Force. It was with the support and help of few loyal army personnel he could later manage to return to India."

Those were the times when systems for recruitment in various Government departments had started getting streamlined and stabilized by way of framing as also implementing formal recruitment rules. Accordingly, when an advertisement appeared in media for recruitment for the post of Naib Tehsildars; Sat Lal Koul applied for the same. After initial scrutiny he was found eligible and in order to short list the applicants a common test was announced. In the meantime, a news appeared in local media that a young Kashmiri from humble background, who was at that time working as 'Upper Division Clerk' in Accountant General's Office, had been selected to be recruited in the State's Gazetted Service. He happened to be Shri Pushkar Nath Koul, who later rose to the post of Chief Secretary of the State. Sat Lal Koul approached him for guidance, who after testing his abilities opined that although his academic knowledge was perfect but he lacked 'General Knowledge' about world affairs and suggested certain book to be studied in order to overcome this deficiency. This way he prepared himself and appeared for the test. Out of around a hundred candidates who took the test, fifteen were selected and Sat Lal Koul topped the list. As a part of the process of streamlining, a Revenue Training School had been established at Srinagar and the selected candidates were directed to join the School for training in theory and practical.

In retrospect, it may be conveniently concluded that selection of Shri Koul as Naib Tehsildar seems to be bit natural or pre-destined and of course, pre- connected with land and land records, in view of following factors:-

i. His grandfather was a landlord, as also a senior official Qanungo (Girdawar) in Revenue Department.

ii. His father was a Patwari in Revenue Department.

iii. His father had taught tit bits about the working of the Revenue Department as also reading and writing Urdu, right from his childhood.

After successful completion of the training, Sat Lal Koul was

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posted as Naib Tehsildar Leh (Ladakh). He vividly recollects and in fact anxious to share with present day Revenue Officers that he started his journey from Srinagar on 6th of September 1950 and reached Leh on 24th of September. In other words, it took him 19 days to reach the place of his first posting. From Srinagar to Kangan he availed local bus service and thereafter the journey was quite nightmarish - almost on foot. In sharing this information Shri Koul, in particular, wanted to convey that service in Revenue Department is always full of many types of challenges including postings at far-flung places as detailed in this paragraph as also elsewhere in this part of the narrative, and who so ever braves the challenges can become a good Revenue Officer.

After serving at Leh for around two years, he was posted as Naib Tehsildar Udhampur, where he remained hardly for 4-5 months and was shifted to Handwara. He then also served as Naib Tehsildar at Bandipora, Nowshera and Sopore before he got his first elevation in the service career with his posting as Tehsildar Karnah. Thereafter, he also worked as Tehsildar at Handwara (2 terms), Uri, Sopore and Baramulla. He got his next elevation in the year 1965, with his appointment as Assistant Commissioner (on special duty) Udhampur where he was entrusted with the special task to oversee arrangements for people dislocated in the wake of 1965 war. Again, in February 1966, when a Post of Special Commissioner Rajouri was established, for handling post 1965 war affairs including rehabilitation of displaced persons, Shri Koul was picked up and posted as Assistant Commissioner with the Special Commissioner Rajouri against a newly created post. His colleague officers, who happened to have worked with him during that period, often recount his capabilities in handling difficult task in those difficult times. Thereafter, he remained posted as Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Baramulla, O.S.D. with Divisional Commissioner Kashmir as well; besides certain other non-Revenue Department assignments, detailed at the close of this part.

Although it is very difficult to recount events of past life at the advanced age of 94 years, yet Shri Koul has shared a few musings of his career; particularly while serving at initial stage in the Revenue Department, which are reproduced, in his own words, as follows:-

i. "When I was posted as Naib Tehsildar Udhampur, I hardly had any knowledge of performing duties of a Magistrate in judicial matters. So, in order to remove the deficiency, I used to go to the residence of a local Sub-Judge to seek his guidance and advice to deal with cases related to criminal matters.

ii. "It was roughly the year1952 when I was posted as Naib

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Tehsildar Handwara of erstwhile District Baramulla now District Kupwara (Kashmir). Excessive rains and snow fall damaged standing crops to a large extent. In order to assess damages and making provision for adequate relief measures special Girdawari was conducted by the field agency of Revenue Department. During that period once the then Revenue Minister, visited few villages in order to personally verify the extent of damages. At one village he enquired from the Patwari concerned about the degree of Kharaba he had shown Kharaba (damage to crops) in register Khasra Girdawari. In response to the question the Patwari replied that 100% Kharaba had been recorded. The Revenue Minister got annoyed, and enquired as to how 100% kharaba had been recorded when still at least some portion of crops were intact; he ordered the Patwari to be placed under suspension with immediate effect. Thereupon, we explained to him that as provided in "Standing Order No: 23", in case of estimated yield from the crops saved were not more than two annas per rupee (12 naya paisa), or in other words not more than 1/8th of the average expected yield, the whole crop has to be recorded as damaged. With this explanation the Minister got satisfied; he not only withdrew his order for suspension of Patwari, rather appreciated the job done, as also the prompt and on the spot appropriate explanation to his observations.

iii. "I was posted as Tehsildar Karnah in the month of January 1957. The Tehsil falls across 'Nasta-Chun pass', later nick named as 'Sadhana Top'. Major portion of the Tehsil is hilly, particularly the areas along the line of control with Pakistan. During those days the area lacked total road connectivity from the main land. From Chowkibal (the last point having road link) onwards one had to track on foot to reach the Tehsil headquarter. After traveling for the whole day, I reached top of the hill in the evening, and stayed in the care of Army Unit stationed there. Few of Tehsil employees had also reached there to receive and accompany me for onward journey. Next day we were required to climb down; and during dinner time, sheer out of my curiosity, I enquired about the status of passage for next day's journey; in response to which they stared at each other, which raised my anxiety. On repeating my query, it was told that there existed no formal track or passage. In order to reach the bottom of the hillock on other side, we will have to just slip down on the frozen snow. Firstly, it looked quite strange and at the same time it frightened me. Next day, after taking breakfast, we started for onward journey. First of all, a local guy did a trial run and then I accompanied by one of my companions moved. We were provided with an empty gunny bag and a stick each; we acted as advised, just sit on the gunny bag and slowly slip downwards. It took us around 20 minutes to reach the base area. It was

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really a terrifying and miraculous exercise, but God willingly we undertook it safely. In the afternoon we reached a village (name forgotten) with scattered houses, as usual in hilly areas. As I was feeling extremely tired we decided to stay there for the night. After taking meals I was provided with a bedding in a room and due to fatigue I slept immediately after lying down on the make shift bed. Early in the morning I felt that my forehead was a bit wet and something was slowly moving there. In a fit of panic, I got up and to my surprise observed that a buffalo was licking my forehead. Later it was told that no separate room was available in the area; in these places human beings and cattle generally stay in one room for want of paucity of roofed accommodation. Anyhow, after overcoming similar hurdles we reached the destination i.e. the Tehsil headquarter at Tangdhar.

iv. "In Tehsil Karnah there is a village Sudhpora, which lies on the 'Line of Control' (LOC) between India and Pakistan. Often there would be a dispute about occupation over a hillock between villagers residing on both sides of LOC, and of course between the Armies of the two countries. Once during my tenure also, the dispute cropped up and this time the matter went to 'United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan'. In order to asses ground reality and sort out the issue, Officers of the Commission stationed at Srinagar decided for conducting spot visit in presence of representatives of both sides. Upon their visit to spot on fixed day, officers of the Commission asked representatives of both sides to present their case. While we established our claim on the basis of 'Latha', 'Khasra Girdawari' and 'Jamabandi' etc., representatives from other side presented certain un-authentic records other than any of the records produced from our side. We pleaded that records referred to by us have been maintained under statuary provisions contained in the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act and have legal sanctity. The officers from other side could not rebut our claim, and therefore, the Commission announced verdict in our favour. This way, with proper presentation of the records a long persisting dispute came to be settled forever."

v. "During the period of my posting as Assistant Commissioner with Special Commissioner Rajouri, on receipt of a report about incursion of insurgents from POK, I was deputed to Kalakote for purpose of ascertaining correct position and also to take necessary measures to prevent infiltration in our territory. One afternoon, while at Kalakote, a report came that intruders had invaded a place named 'Metta' about 16-17 K.M away from Kalakote and had destroyed tin-sheds located there besides taking away few civilians including the Chief of the Garrison. Upon visiting the site, it was observed that two tin-sheds had been hit by

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bullets, which bore testimony to the savagery inflicted. I was accompanied by an Inspector of Police. During inspection inside the staff room, we found a wooden box, a camera and some amount of cash lying there. I took hold of all this and asked my driver to keep all the things in our official vehicle. A short while thereafter, the Inspector confided to share the booty between ourselves, as according to him, there was enough evidence to the affect that no cash was found there. I pleaded with him that after reaching Kalakote the matter will be settled in a calm atmosphere. In fact, I thought that in case I did not accept his suggestion, he would have killed me and claimed that I was killed by invaders. On reaching Kalakote, I got the wooden box and other items deposited into a cloak room, ensuring its proper safety. After three days the persons who had been taken away by the invaders, but for one Kashmiri guy, were released. The Chief Engineer, whose name was perhaps, Habibullah did not accept the release without other colleagues. A few days later, however, the entire group was released; whom I received and lodged at Kalakote by providing them suitable accommodation. The Chief of the Garrison seemed upset, believing that being a Muslim he will not be trusted, rather would be suspected of having embezzled the money and then created the entire drama to pocket the same. I enquired from him about amount of money in the safe at the time of the raid. In response he disclosed it to be around eight thousand and something, besides a Japanese camera some wearing apparels and few other articles. After opening the safe room, I handed him over the entire things, which he checked and found everything to be intact. He fell on my feet saying that he thought Angels are in Heaven alone, but others like me could also be there on Earth. Anyway, higher authorities including Shri Girdhari Lal Dogra the then Finance Minister were kept informed of the whole episode, and we received due appreciations."

According to Shri Koul, he terms his posting as Tehsildar Karnah as the best part of his career. He remained posted there for around two and a half years and enjoyed the assignment in every respect. He found people and staff of the Tehsil, on the whole, quite gentle and co-operating. He enjoyed vast powers including exercising judicial powers, besides dealing with Revenue Department matters and establishing liaison as also maintaining cordial relations between Army and civilians. Arranging availability and ensuring fair distribution of ration and other essential commodities to civilians in the Tehsils was one of the major and ticklish jobs, which he managed to handle on the strength of experience gained by him.

It may be of interest to the readers of new generation to know

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that during those old days, Revenue Officers did exercise judicial powers as Judicial Magistrates vested under the Jammu and Kashmir State Ranbir Penal Code 1989 (1932 A.D.) and the Code of Criminal Procedure 1989 (1933 A.D.) as well. The situation came be changed with the implementation of 'the Jammu and Kashmir Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions Act, 1966 A.D.' enacted in the State under Act No: XL of 1966. After the enactment of the said Act, Revenue Officers (in their capacity as District Magistrate, Sub-divisional Magistrate or Executive Magistrate) enjoy powers under Code of Criminal Procedure limited to only a few sections dealing with 'Prevention of Offences', 'Unlawful Assemblies', 'Public Nuisances' 'Nuisance or Apprehended Danger' and 'Disputes as to Immovable Property etc.

In the cadre of Deputy Commissioner, Sat Lal Koul has held three important Districts of Jammu Division viz, Kathua, Doda (presently three Districts namely, Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban) and Udhampur. He was known for having good relation with public. As once shared by him, he has very high regard for the then Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Thakur Devi Dass, the local Cabinet Ministe; who in turn also had very good opinion about his working. Once when both the personalities were on a visit to Bhaderwah town (District Doda), after finishing his address to the public, the Chief Minister asked for any demands of common interest from their side; in response to which, in one voice, they said that they have only one demand which should be accepted. The Chief Minister enquired from the Deputy Commissioner, who was standing by his side as to what could be probable demand, and as per his own assessment he told that demand for a separate District for Bhaderwah has been in the air for many years and they might like to have some commitment in respect of that. Anyhow, when asked to specify, to the amusement of one and all, they demanded that the Deputy Commissioner should not be transferred. In those old times the District was known to be a notorious one for causing frequent Law and Order problems. Earlier many officers had been tried, but none could create such a positive impact as had been possible during the tenure of incumbent Deputy Commissioner. Hence, although Shri Sat Lal had already spent more than two years as Deputy Commissioner of Doda District; respecting the sentiments of public, he was asked to stay there for sometime more without spelling out period of stay.

In addition to important assignments held in Revenue Department, he also looked after certain other administrative positions such as, Joint Registrar Co-operative Societies Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner Food & Supplies (now a days known as Director Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs), Secretary J & K Public Service

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Commission, Director Employment, Secretary Delimitation Commission (headed by Wazir Janki Nath). He continued as Secretary Delimitation Commission even after the date of his superannuation (on extension in service basis) till the life of the Commission.

Finally, it would be in place to convey his advice to the present-day Revenue Officers as follows: -

i. "A Revenue Officer must know all relevant laws and regulations, at least those applicable to Revenue Department. However, only theoretical knowledge would not serve the purpose. In order to have full grasp, he should thoroughly study the laws in order to be able to know literal meaning, rather understand the basic spirit of these laws and regulations. There is a wrong notion about imperfections in existing laws. On the contrary the fact is that sometimes, flaws in implementation of the laws make them look faulty; which aspect needs serious consideration at appropriate levels in administrative machinery."

ii. "In the working of Revenue Department, 'Hikmat-Amli' (practical way of working or finding workable solution) is the buzzword, which sometimes woks wonder. Adopt it and shun 'Hakimana Raveya (bureaucratic attitude), particularly while dealing with poor peasantry."

In concluding the narrative, it merits a mention that the 'Name and Fame' Shri Sat Lal koul has been able to earn during his service career in the State of Jammu and Kashmir has been the result of his sincere work, hard labour, integrity, and above all his sympathetic attitude towards the people. His good health even at the age of 94 years is certainly a 'God's Gift' to him and one has reasons to feel envious of him.



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RAJ KUMAR GUPTA

Raj Kumar Gupta has also been one of the veterans and reputed Revenue Officers of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. He was born at Mirpur (now in POK) on 23rd of October 1935. His father Dr. Sita Ram was running a Chemist shop in the town. In view of ailing health of his mother, Shri Gupta had to move to Jammu at the tender age of five years; where he spent whole of the early period of his life under the care and foster parent ship of his maternal aunt (Sister of his mother) and her husband Lala Dina Nath Mahajan - a leading Lawyer of those times. He received his education from Model Academy, the only Public High School in Jammu city then, from where he passed his Matriculation in the year 1948. He then joined Government Gandhi Memorial Science College Jammu and after doing his Graduation in the year 1952, initially he joined a private enterprise of a near relative. But soon thereafter he got a chance to be part of the group of about a dozen young Graduates, who were selected by the Government and deputed to the Accountant General's Office for receiving training in Accounts.

It is one thing that Accounts was not the subject to his taste, but as the luck would have been, hardly 5-6 months had passed; probably it was the month of December 1954 when he among few others received intimation of having been selected as a Naib Tehsildar candidate. They were deputed for receiving Settlement and Revenue training at Rajouri, where Settlement work was going on. After spending one year at Rajouri they were sent for similar further training in Tangmarg area of District Baramulla (Kashmir) for another year. On successful completion of the two yearlong training; Raj Kumar Gupta was appointed as Naib Tehsildar and posted at Samba, where he joined on 26th of December 1956. In the cadre of Naib Tehsildar, he also served in Niabat Chenani District Udhampur. During this period, he cleared the prescribed departmental examination by 'Deputy Commissioner Standard', and therefore, he was promoted and got his first posting as Tehsildar Ramban - considered as a tough posting during those old days, for reasons detailed hereafter; where he joined in the month of October 1960. Ramban Tehsil was spread

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over a vast area mostly hilly and kandi. The Tehsil headquarter is located almost midway en-route on the Jammu Srinagar Highway. Besides other normal duties as a Revenue Officer, transportation and distribution of Government ration up to the remotest corners of the mostly hilly Tehsil, as also management of stranded passengers due to frequent road blockades, were the two main challenging tasks for the Tehsildar Ramban. He vividly recalls that many times difficult situations had to be faced, but God willingly, he always succeeded in managing and sailing through smoothly. At the same time, unhesitatingly he likes to add that his subordinate field agency would always work spade a spade braving difficulty; and according to him that was due to very good team spirit - invariably an essential part of the age-old traditions - which prevailed in the past, particularly in Revenue Department. After a successful tenure at Ramban, he was posted as Tehsildar Aknoor and then as Tehsildar Kathua, before he got his next elevation in the year 1966, when he was posted as Collector Land Acquisition (P.W.D.) Jammu. Thereafter, he had also the occasion to work as Executive Officer Jammu Municipality during the President ship of Vaid Vaishnoo Dutt - a legendry gentleman politician of those times. He gladly terms it as a very good experience of his service career in working with the veteran and respected citizen of the City; who would repose full confidence in him.

His abilities and knowledge about the working of the Revenue Department came to much lime light during his posting as Additional Secretary in the Revenue Department, about one and a half years, then as Secretary to the Government in the same Department for around two years and the Deputy Commissioner (Central) in the office of Financial Commissioner (Revenue). In between he also held the assignment of Labour Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir for a period of one and a half year before he was posted as Revenue Secretary. He was then picked up to be posted as Relief Commissioner, where he contributed a lot by introducing work culture of a true 'Relief Organisation' after visiting and studying the same in some outside States of the country. It may not be wrong to say that the present Disaster Management Department of the State owes its origin from the times of Raj Kumar Gupta as the then Relief Commissioner. Later, he also had the occasions to serve as Commissioner of Enquiries in the Secretariat and Managing Director, Himalayan Wool Combers - a prestigious Public Sector Undertaking under the State. In view of his all-over meritorious performance; he was inducted into I. A. S. with allotment year as 1985. At the fag end of his service he held the assignment of Joint Financial Commissioner (Appeals); wherefrom he retired on 31st October 1993.

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Shri Raj Kumar Gupta has shared some of his experiences; quite relevant to the working of the Revenue Department as follows;

i. While Raj Kumar Gupta was posted as Tehsildar Akhnoor, probably it was during the years 1963-1965, one day a neatly dressed local man called on him at his official residence introducing himself to be the 'Karinda'(Manager) of landed estate of Kanwar Narinder Singh, who those days was the Provincial Commissioner (present times' Divisional Commissioner) Jammu. He offered the latter a seat and enquired as to what brought him there? Instead of putting any demand or posing any problem the latter informed that Kanwar Sahib, by which short name Shri Narinder Singh was commonly known, has deputed him to deliver some customary gifts on his behalf. (It included one bag of rice, one bag of wheat and one tin of mustard oil) The Tehsildar was taken aback; how could he receive such gifts from none other than his Provincial Head of the Department. On expressing reluctance on the part of the Tehsildar, the Manager told that since family of Kanwar Sahib has got agricultural land within Tehsil Akhnoor, it was part of an old ritual in the family (the exact words he used - 'PURANI PARAMPARRA') to give such gifts to the Patwari concerned as also the Tehsildar, continuing from the times of their ancestors. He further added that he had directions not to take it back, and in case he (the Tehsildar) has to say anything, he should talk to Kanwar Sahib himself, whenever he would call on him.

There was no alternative but to accept the compliment. But after a few days when Shri Raj Kumar happened to be at Jammu, he called on the Commissioner in his office, and very humbly expressed his unwillingness to keep the gifts from the latter. But the Commissioner was not ready to talk on the issue and tried to close the topic by saying that he cannot go against the traditions set forth by his ancestors. Here it may also be in place make a mention that theirs was not an ordinary Zamindar family; Kanwar Sahib's father Thakur Kartar Singh, had been a District and Sessions Judge in the State Judicial Department, and had also served as Minister in the Maharaja's Council.

Again, it needs to be added that the 'Paramparra' or tradition of giving such gifts, as mentioned in the earlier paragraph, to a Patwari or other officials of the Revenue Department by persons of high position was common in those old days. It is said that even the Maharaja of our State used to call Parwari(s) of the areas where ever his private properties were located, at least once in a year and offer a Kashmiri Shawl to him as an annual gift. In this context an excerpt from the observation made by Shri E. N. Mangat Rai at page 47 of his book titled, 'Commitment My Style'

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would be quite appropriate to be cited here. As elsewhere also mentioned E.N. Mangat Rai was part of the last batch of I.C.S. officers and had served united Punjab for a long period, including his assignment as Chief Secretary in Partap Singh Kairoon times. He had also served as Chief Secretary of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The reference mentioned hereinbefore, reads as;

"Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, then "Premier" of Punjab, and later Governor, said he always paid even while occupying these positions, customary gifts to the Patwari where he owned land. It was not done, nor was it worthwhile, to ignore this tradition."

It seems the tradition under discussion had certain background; one among others could be that Patwari was having meagre emoluments, and in order to compensate him, big Zamindars or person of good resources used to help him out. So far as the first point is concerned, it will be apt to once again refer to Shri E.N. Mangat Rai who at page 47 of the said book has recorded as under;

"The basic work for all these processes was performed by the Patwari in charge of three to five villages. He was the administrative man-of-all-work relating to land problems. He had an infinite- small pay- in the neighbourhood of Rs 30 per month at the time- and comparatively vast powers for good or evil. He tended to use them both ways and there is little doubt that Patwaris practically lived off the land as far as their daily needs went."

The view point expressed by Shri E.N. Mangat Rai to the extent of smallness of the pay of a Patwari is further strengthened by the provision in 'Standing Order No: 23-A (Mutations), which provides for payment of a part of the fees recovered for attestation of a mutations to the Patwari entering the same. For instance, clause 112 of the 'Standing Order' issued in the year 1933 (A.D.) (original provision) reads as under;

"112. Fees due to Patwari: One anna fee per mutations described in clause (a) of paragraph 58 and 1/5 of the total fees in all other cases stated in clause (b) of paragraph 58 will be the perquisite of the Patwari. The Patwari who enters the case in the mutation will be entitled to the fees."

N.B.: Similar provision exists even now-a-days in a bit amended form.

As regards the other point i.e. tradition of sending gifts, the same is further elaborated by the gist of talk between Kanwar Narinder Singh the then Commissioner Jammu Division and Raj Kumar Gupta the then

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Tehsildar Akhnoor; when the latter had called on him to express his inability to accept gifts sent by the former. The Commissioner had told him that as per family traditions gifts were being sent to Patwari every year when main (Kharif) crop was received. He had added that possibility of bad elements in the Department cannot be ruled out; in case any such bad element i.e. a Patwari would play a mischief in making some wrong or false entry in Revenue records, the family would have to approach Courts to set the entry right. Therefore, the elders might have set a very practical tradition, and as a part of that ritual, gift is sent to Tehsildar as well as a good will gesture.

ii. The other events pertain to the period when Raj Kumar Gupta was posted as Additional Secretary in the Revenue Secretariat. Before coming to the event, however, it may be added that as happily shared by Shri Raj Kumar Gupta, he held Shri O. N. Dhar the incumbent Revenue Secretary to be a man of high standing. According to him although Shri Dhar was not from Revenue background, yet he had gained good grasp on the working of the Department, and wherever he had any doubt he would not hesitate in consulting or discussing the issue with his subordinates. Besides, he was very polite and considerate towards his junior colleagues in the Department. In this context Shri Raj Kumar Gupta once also shared that when he joined as Additional Secretary in the Revenue Department, he was totally novice in Secretariat procedures. When he sent his first file to the Secretary, it came back with a remark that notes were not numbered; another file contained remark that file was not page numbered. This way Shri Dhar guided him at every step in the process of improving his knowledge of Secretariat procedures.

Coming to the event, it would be more appropriately narrated in his own words, as under:-

"While I was posted as Additional Secretary in the Revenue Department, Shri O.N. Dhar was the Revenue Secretary. In Srinagar city, in Bandh area - adjacent to S.P.S. Museum, a road was proposed to be widened and acquisition paper for the land coming under the widening project were initiated by the subordinate Revenue agency. In the process, land acquisition papers for the said widening project reached the Revenue Secretariat and on examination it was observed that 2-3 kanals (exact area not remembered) of land belonging to Shri Agha Muzaffar, who at that particular point of time was the Chief Secretary of the State, was also involved. Compensation for the acquisition of the said piece of land came to a few lakhs of rupees. A detailed examination of the revenue papers, however, revealed that the land under reference was Nazool

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property. As per revenue papers attached with the case file, in ownership column the land was recorded as Nazool, but at the same time the name of Shri Agha Muzaffar was also recorded in the same column with a reference to certain mutation order by virtue of which the same came to be transferred to him through inheritance. It was felt that since there was no provision of conferment of ownership rights in Nazool lands, as such payment of compensation would not be legally admissible. Since the matter pertained to the incumbent Chief Secretary; it was a sensitive issue. Therefore, before recording any observations in the matter, I took the file to the Revenue Secretary and explained to him the whole story. Although Shri Dhar was a non-Revenue-back ground officer yet he was a competent, shrewd and reputed officer of the times. It took him no time to understand the problem. While appreciating my concern, he advised me to personally call on the Chief Secretary and discuss with him before proceeding further in the matter. Although it was a sensitive issue concerning the Chief Secretary himself, yet very reluctantly and hesitatingly one day I called on him. I told him that some important issue was to be discussed, so he took me to his ante-room. When I explained him the whole matter, contrary to my fears of a back lash, he appreciated the step. On the other hand, he informed that the land actually belonged to his maternal grandfather and came to be inherited by him by virtue of a will deed. He further added that his maternal grandfather namely Shri Agha Sayed Husain, at a certain point of time, was Revenue Minister in Maharaja's Council, and due to his possessing, that position some lower functionary might have obliged him by illegal entry by recording his name in ownership column. Therefore, he added that he would not like to claim any compensation for the land coming under the process of widening of the road. To my suggestion to dig out old records to check veracity of the entry, he plainly said, "nothing doing, JO GALT HAI SO GALT HAI - (a wrong is always a wrong)". The case was thereafter disposed of accordingly."

The event cannot be termed as an ordinary disposal of a routine case. While the understanding and initiative at the level of the Additional Secretary as also the support of the then Revenue Secretary was appreciable; at the same time the manner in which Shri Agha Muzaffar the then Chief Secretary dealt with the case very correctly and sportingly, was all the more commendable and unheard of during present times.

On some later date, Rajinder Singh Parihar, who was then the senior most Staff Officer (Special Assistant) to the then Chief Secretary, enquired from Raj Kumar Gupta details of any important matter discussed by him with the then Chief Secretary. According to Raj Kumar Gupta, he once again became apprehensive that the Chief Secretary might have felt

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annoyed due to loss of compensation payable to him, as proposed by subordinate Revenue agency. In a depressed mood, he disclosed the whole issue to Rajinder Singh Parihar, but as a great surprise for him the latter disclosed that the Chief Secretary was very much impressed by his working and very shortly he may be elevated to a higher assignment; within few weeks of the talk, Raj Kumar Gupta was up-graded and posted as Labour Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir.

iii. While Raj Kumar Gupta was posted as Revenue Secretary, once a leading Forest Lessee of Jammu accompanied by the then M.L.A. Ramban and another leading businessman approached him with an application for allotment of land; which was marked to the subordinate Revenue agency for examination and report. Hardly a period of a fortnight had passed when papers were received back with recommendation for allotment of around eight kanals of State land situate adjoining Jammu city, in favour of the Forest Lessee to be utilised by him for commercial purposes. In the State of Jammu and Kashmir, as per standing provision of law, transfer of land in favour of a person belonging to non-agriculturist class, other than up to four kanals of land for residential purpose, is prohibited. In the case under reference, since the said Forest Lessee (the applicant) belonged to non-agriculturist class, the papers were returned seeking clarification as to how land could be allotted in violation of standing provision of law. Only after a few days the papers were received back with a report that the applicant had produced a copy of Khasra Girdawari indicating him to be cultivating certain piece of agricultural land. The Revenue Secretary got the papers processed and submitted the file to the then Minister of State Revenue, expressing his opinion that mere an entry for a crop or two in Register Khasra Girdawari would not make the applicant a person belonging to agriculturist class, and that the recommendations of the subordinate Revenue agency did not merit any consideration. But on the contrary, the Minister of State Revenue accepted the recommendation of the subordinate Revenue agency, obviously over ruling the observations of the Revenue Secretary. The Revenue Secretary discussed the matter with the Minister of State Revenue; pointed out that the issue needs reconsideration in view the law position explained in his note and in case the latter did not agree he would like to mark the file to the Revenue Minister for orders. Good sense prevailed upon the Minister of State Revenue, and he agreed to review his order. Accordingly, the Revenue Secretary resubmitted the case to Minister of State Revenue; who, in turn, in line with proposal of the former, turned down the recommendation of subordinate Revenue

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agency for allotment of State land in favour of the Forest Lessee. (Names of persons connected with the case have been intentionally withheld).

Once, when specifically asked for his views about the status of working in Revenue Department as experienced by him in the past as well as the present times; Raj Kumar Gupta quite sadly admitted that day by day things are going from bad to worst. Continuing on the topic, he asserted that in olden times one would feel pride in being part of Revenue Department - the prestigious wing of State administrative machinery; whereas, now it has just become a department of the State set-up. Elaborating it further he added that there may be number of factors responsible for the degradation in the department, but would like to highlight following two points in particular, in his own words, as under:-

i. "**Lack of trainings:** lack of well-deserved initial training to the new entrants in the department at all the levels could be easily termed as the major culprit. While recalling his own training period he said that although there was no regular Training Institute(s) in the State those days, yet they received quite rigorous on the job training for two years; from the persons who themselves were well versed in laws, rules and practices prevalent in the department. Now-a-days despite the fact that we have two regular Revenue Training Institutes, one at Jammu and the other at Srinagar, reportedly the standard of training being imparted is not satisfactory; mainly for the reason that there is no regulated procedure for selection and posting of Trainers. Posting of staff as Trainers in routine is not at all desirable. On the other hand, only experienced personnel need be posted there and they should be given adequate incentives in order to attract willing but well qualified people. Finally, he suggested that there is need to have a separate 'Training Manual' dealing with all important aspects relating to trainings. According to him steps towards this direction were initiated during his posting as Revenue Secretary, which however could not be given concrete shape before he was posted out.

ii. "**Up-dating of Revenue Records:** Another aspect attributable towards this direction is lack of interest in periodical preparation and up-dating of Revenue Records in accordance with prescribed procedures. He wondered in recalling how, in olden times, senior officers particularly up to the level of Deputy Commissioners would themselves hold monthly reviews at Tehsil level or sometimes even at Niabt level. While reviewing performance of

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each and every official in open darbar, defaulters in achieving the desired progress would be reprimanded and the work of good performers received well deserved appreciation. These practices, for horde of reasons, seem to have been abandoned, rather become thing of the past. Concluding his remarks in this regard he suggested that there is need to give serious thought towards revival of features like this in the working of the Department."

Despite of his advanced age factor, Shri Raj Kumar Gupta is having good health and for that the credit goes to his life style. He is a regular morning walker and good socialite. He hardly misses a visit to Jammu Club in the afternoon and is fond of playing Bridge. One can find in him a satisfied person with no regrets in his life, and is presently staying put in a self-constructed house in posh colony of Gandhi Nagar enjoying comfortable retired life among his sons and grandchildren.



P.S.

Shri Raj Kumar Gupta left for his heavenly abode on 20-01 2022. While exchanging the sad news with one of our common friends, Shri B.D. Sharma IAS (Retd.), the above narrative was also shared with the latter. After going through the same, Shri Sharma has articulated the following observations;

"Very interesting and useful details of his experiences. He had quite a good grasp over the Revenue law and had the spine to stand for his views. Well narrated and presented."

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THE TREND SETTERS

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BASHIR AHMED RUNYAL

Journey of Bashir Ahmed Runyal to become a civil servant-a Tehsildar in the Revenue Gazetted Service of Jammu and Kashmir State-seems to be an outcome of an apparently unpleasant incident which indirectly paved way for his entry in to the civil service and changed his entire course of life. While he was doing post-graduation in Economics from Kashmir University, one fine day he was served with a summon from Tehsildar, Executive Magistrate, Ramban through Head of the Department of Economics, Kashmir University; asking therein to appear in person in a matter of apprehension of breach of peace and tranquility. Being naive to the nuances of legal system, this was a shock of life espoused with a tremendous amount of fear psychosis. He was advised by the HOD ostensibly with an element of suspicion, not to indulge any kind of activity which can later on prove detrimental for his education and career in the long run. Not knowing how to react to the alleged criminal complaint in which he had no role, made him speechless for the moment. He remained quite upset for few days and finally left for his village one day before the relevant date with a view to attend the Court of Executive Magistrate. The Journey from Magarkote - a small village located on the National highway - to his village was to be covered on foot. On way from Magarkote to his village he met with his father and a School going brother, who were going to Ramban and during this meeting his father casually asked Runyal to go through the prospectus of Combined Services Competitive Examination and fill the form which he had purchased from a local Teacher on five time more than the actual cost and had left at home for him. After reaching home Runyal studied the prospectus and made up his mind for trying his luck. This, was the background which led him to the arena of civil service, as otherwise, till then he had no knowledge about the existence of such a prestigious service. So, next day, before leaving his house for the court attendance, he made it sure to take his academic certificates along. After attending the court proceedings, he filled up the form and submitted the same by post to the Public Service Commission, Jammu. Actually, this was the starting point of his journey towards joining civil service and in fact, became a turning point in his career. He later on

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realised that the shocking and traumatic experience of falsely implicating him, virtually proved a blessing in disguise for him. In this context, Runyal often refers to the words of Fidel Castro, "Men do not shape destiny, destiny produces the man for the hour." This holds true for him at least, he firmly believes. He further adds that Actually, only after joining as Tehsildar through the process of Combined Competitive Service Examination held by J & K Public Service Commission, he realised how important is the Civil Service in running the affairs of the Government. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that more than anything else, the credit of Runyal becoming a civil servant in a Gazetted cadre of the State undoubtedly goes to the act of wisdom of his father. Had he not procured the application form, and that too at a much higher cost than it actually valued, Runyal might have missed the bus.

Bashir Ahmed Runyal, popularly also known as Runyal sahib or simply Runyal (among his colleagues), was born on 10th of Mach 1954 in village Maligam of Pogal area, District Ramban - an area known for a good literacy rate. His father was a farmer and also part time contractor, who had deep knowledge about religion and was doing social work as well. Pogal or commonly known as Pogal-Paristan is an area which has remained politically vibrant even before independence. The inhabitants are mostly Rajputs and their mother tongue is a Pougli dialect which has 75% resemblance with Kashmiri language. About 80% population converted to Islam probably in 19th century. Even before partition, there existed a private Middle School in the area, being run by Trustees from Lahore (now Pakistan). The School imparted free education, due to which elders in the locality were mostly literate as compared to other parts of the present District Ramban.

After initial schooling up to 8th standard from Government Middle School Maligam, and then High School Pogal up to Matriculation; he joined Government Degree College, Anantnag in Compound Arts stream with Mathematics and Economics as the main subjects. Runyal has very fond memories about his College life and as often shared by him, his first year in the College was of routine nature in which beside adjusting in the different environment and social setup, it took some time to come out of this ordeal of cultural shock. This constraint, of course, affected the initiative and urge to demonstrate one's hidden talent. From second year onward, after getting acclimatised in the different cultural and social atmosphere, he started participating in extracurricular activities. The inherent shyness of rural background was partially overpowered by the resolve and urge to showcase talent. The reason being that the College was hub of extracurricular activities and he was quite keen to be part of

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these events. One day, when he got a chance to participate in a multi lingual impromptu elocution contest/debate competition in which after giving consent to speak for or against a topic to be announced later on, he ventured to volunteer himself as a speaker in Urdu. The speakers were called to the stage to speak on the basis of draw of lots. Luckily his name was announced at fourth place which provided him reasonable time to muster courage, gain some confidence and prepare points for speech. He could fluently speak for four minutes and fearing interruption, concluded his speech and received unexpected round of applause. He got third position and was rewarded with certificate and a copy of 'Oxford Dictionary'. Later on, Head of the Department of Urdu and a renowned poet, told him that as per his assessment, he deserved first position but since the contents of his speech were not properly evaluated by Judges with Science background, as such, he was placed at third position. This was again a moral booster for a shy village boy who could muster courage to stand up and speak extempore before a gathering of 2000 students and galaxy of highly reputed scholars. The event gave him a tremendous self-confidence and sort of prominence among the student community also. In the final year of his College, facing a cut-throat competition, he was selected as Editor of Urdu section of College Magazine, "Vareenag". In short, the Degree College Anantnag provided Runyal a platform for undertaking literary work as well. He completed his post-graduation in October 1976; simultaneously prepared for and appeared in the Combined Service Competitive Examination. After having been declared as successful in the 'Mains', Viva Voce was conducted in the month of May 1977. Finally, the selection orders were issued in the month of November 1977, when he actually entered in to Civil Service as Tehsildar (Probationer) and joined in the Revenue Training Institute Jammu.

Recalling his training period, he once shared his observations that during their training in the Revenue Training Institute Jammu, the staff headed by late O.P. Bali, the then Principal, was quite competent, friendly and experienced. Mostly they were given intensive revenue related training which inculcated a fair amount of confidence in them to deal with complicated and precarious problems of revenue related matters.

After completion of two years long mandatory training, including theory and practical as also attachment with various offices and courts, Bashir Ahmed Runyal was posted as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms, Gool Gulabghar with headquarter at Mahore - a very far flung area not then connected with road. Those days, the main as well as important task assigned to Revenue Officers was the implementation of the 'Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976'. Therefore, before joining at the new place of

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postings, all the new entrants were asked to attend two weeks orientation course in the office of the Agrarian Reforms Commissioner, at Jammu. His observation and impressions about the said orientation course, are summarised in the following paragraphs;

"The forenoon session was taken by Shri Ghulam Mustfa Khan, Agrarian Reforms Commissioner and afternoon by his Special Assistant Shri Shiv Jee Bhat K.A.S. Both the officers were highly competent and discussed all aspects of the Act and the Rules made there under. The operational hiccups and bottlenecks encountered by the field functionaries were discussed in detail and their remedial measures were also suggested. All the participating officers attended this course and the whole session was vibrant and highly educative. This intensive training gave us not only proper grasp of this revolutionary law but also its correlation with Jammu & Kashmir Land Revenue Act 1996 (samvat), Jammu & Kashmir Tenancy Act 1980 (samvat) and various Government Orders and statutory instructions issued from time to time. As a Revenue Officer, amongst one of the few legendary personalities in official hierarchy of the State, Shri Mustafa khan, Agrarian Reforms Commissioner, no doubt being the most knowledgeable and competent officer can be rated among legendary Revenue Officers. I am highly impressed by his grasp and knowledge of the revenue laws. His Assistant, Shri Shiv Jee Bhat, though not of his stature in terms of seniority, but equally very competent and perfect Revenue knowing officer also need appreciation. Both these officers had an indelible imprint on the entire batch of 1977 Revenue Gazetted Service Officers who have proved their mettle in various capacities at senior level in the State administration".

During the long Journey as a Civil servant Runyal had many challenging assignments and is known to always have accomplished the task with dedication and commitment. He served as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Gool Gulabghar, Tehsildar Banihal, Tehsildar Doda ,Sub-divisional Magistrate Kishtwar (two terms), Sub-divisional Magistrate Shopian, Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Rajouri, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar and Jammu, Deputy commissioner Rajouri and Anantnag, Director Food and Supplies Kashmir, Director Rural Development Kashmir, Additional Commissioner Kashmir, Relief Commissioner (Migrants) Jammu, Relief Commissioner Earthquake Operation Uri, Director Estates J & K, Director Technical Education J & K, Commissioner, Secretary, Technical Education, Youth services and Sports, Commissioner cum Secretary, Revenue, and finally as Commissioner cum Secretary Labour and Employment. He was inducted in to Indian Administrative Service in February 2004 with 1995 as year of

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allotment and was promoted to 'Super Time Scale' of I.A.S. (Cadre of Commissioner) in October, 2010. He is a firm believer in service to the poor and excellence in civil service and the same would be evident from the views once shared by him as under :

"The excellence in civil service is the main hallmark which a civil servant is supposed to achieve. As someone has remarked that excellence means "you are better today than you were yesterday, but not as good as you will be tomorrow". With this understanding, you can see there is no finish line in Administrative set up especially in the Revenue Department or any other organisation with public dealing, the officers have to perform some of the toughest functions in an office or in the field. To satisfy the needs of so many, your technical skills and your interpersonal skills must be well-balanced to generate efficient and effective results. You are supposed to keep pace with ever-changing situation and you need to work with and through many people to meet deadlines, resolve conflicts, gather information, and coordinate schedules and logistics and finally give desired results. In the field assignment, you are often the first point-of-contact for the public. Your competence and professionalism in meeting the demands might be one of the most important factors to build public perception about your department. We have seen the autocratic way of administrative acumen being practiced by our seniors. Also, some have adopted the combination of autocratic and benevolent behaviour and some have been content with complete benevolent behaviour in their discharge of official business. But I have tried to adopt the natural way of dealing with situations on merit keeping in mind the maxim "Information/knowledge is the power". This helped me in handling even highly sensitive and difficult situations during testing times."

According to Bashir Ahmed Runyal, there was smooth sailing in so far as initial 10 years of active field assignment are concerned in which besides routine official business, certain extraordinary events also happened. The extensive Revenue training and brain storming orientation course mentioned earlier inculcated fair amount of confidence which in the long run helped in smoothly implementing the agrarian reforms. There are certain events which are unforgettable and bitter as well as sweet memories have become inseparable part of the personal and official life, he adds. Of course, he is willing to share few of these events, as precious moments of his life, in his own words, in the following paras;

i. "During the period of my posting as Tehsildal Banihal, in May 1984, in village Neel, an extraordinary incident of returning of a marriage

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party empty handed i.e. without bride had occurred and shocked the entire area being unique of its kind in the history of that area. The incident had shaken the society and led to an unprecedented tension between two rival groups. On fourth day of the incident, I happened to visit the area in connection with official work. After completion of the routine work, I along with my staff and some respectable persons of the area left for another destination. On the way, we noticed both the factions fighting each other. Some respectable people of the village approached and requested me for intervention. I called both the groups, heard them in detail and after persuasion they agreed for the final settlement. Sensing the sensitivity of the matter, it was decided to perform Nikah immediately. It was an isolated place - a natural spring, where both parties along with bride and bridegroom were present. 'Nikah Khawani' (Muslim marriage ceremony) was performed directly between the bride and the bridegroom under my supervision and it was recorded in the 'Roznamcha Waqiati (Daily Events Diary) of Patwari concerned and later in my daily dairy as well. The entire entourage was converted as Baaraties (marriage party) for both the parties. This amicable settlement was appreciated by cross section of society. On way to the next destination, women folk working in fields were seen appreciating us by bringing down their head scarf and raising hands for prayer and showering their good wishes. This experience in the beginning of my career had an emotional bearing on me which I still cherish.

ii. "The Civil servants especially those in the Revenue administration often had very tough times. The Jammu and Kashmir State remained in turmoil for the last more than thirty years. This was a highly testing time for the J & K State bureaucracy. The local Officers were more vulnerable in the prevailing political unrest due to insurgency. The safety of family and relations was also an issue in some sensitive nature of postings. The first few years of insurgency (till 1992) saw a relative domination of the militant groups when the casualties were mainly civilian. But Security Forces gained an upper hand in eliminating militants. though civilian casualties continued to mount. Despite this, the violence continued. I was posted as Sub-divisional Magistrate Shopian in first week of February 1990. My predecessor in office, an IAS Officer, was recalled after the law and Order situation worsened following killing of four youths and injuring several others by the Security Forces allegedly while playing cricket. I was asked to report immediately. My wife was seriously ill after having given birth to a premature child. There was nobody to look after her at Jammu. So, I was compelled to shift my ailing wife to my house at Ramban. Her medical condition was serious and I had to take her from

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residence to the Taxi on road side by stretcher. This was a testing time for my family and an element of despondency on the system in which I was deliberately targeted by someone very important in the high echelons of power. Nobody listened to my request. Even the Chief Secretary was aware about my plight but could not help. Shri Jagmohan was Governor of the State and his writ was final for all. In Kashmir valley, every institution of the State was in disarray. My vehicle was attacked twice, but God willing I survived. The sad and tragic part associated with this tenure always haunts me as my mother died on 30 of July 1990 and wireless message was sent from Police Station Ramsoo on the same day but delivered to me on 4th of August.

iii. "Again, during the period of my posting as Sub-divisional Magistrate Shopian, an incident of kidnapping took place in an interior village. In the month of June 1991, I along with Shri Bashir Ahmed Mir Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, Shri Nazar Mohammed Khan, Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Pulwama, and one Shri Mohammed Ibrahim Chief Education Officer visited the village for distribution of relief to 13 families whose houses were gutted in a devastating fire incident. After distribution of relief, on our way back, an ambush was laid by about dozen militants and we were caught unaware. They were interested in kidnapping the Deputy Commissioner only but we insisted to accompany him. We were forcibly taken to some unknown place probably in District Anantnag. We did not lose our wits and did serious arguments with them on permissibility of such acts by our religion and finally succeeded in securing the release of all including the Deputy Commissioner. We were set free late in the evening. One thing I learnt from the experience that the honest handling of official matters with transparency and pro-people approach is the main weapon which protect civil servants from public wrath. Every bit of information about our behaviour was known to the militants. It would also be worth mentioning here that Shri Nazar Mohammed Khan Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Pulwama played a vital role in securing the safe release of Deputy Commissioner by his peculiar humorous way of handling such a serious issue. The dialogue which he made with them was such a pleasant and hilarious which cannot be explained in words here".

His tenure as the Deputy Commissioner of Rajouri (more than two years) was also quite hectic and challenging. The District was highly militancy infested, but his earlier posting as Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Rajouri often helped a lot in defusing certain critical situations, which cropped up there. He vividly recalls that before his taking over the charge of the assignment, on 24th September 1997, militants had

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attacked in Swari village of Budhal Tehsil resulting in killing of 8 and injuring 4 people (Hindus). This was the major attack in the District against Hindus which became a cause for migration of people to the safer areas in and around Rajouri town. The epicentre of militancy was in the Tehsils like Dharal, Budhal, Thanna Mandi and outer parts of Rajouri town. Mostly the militants would target Hindu majority areas like Kalakote and Nowshera. In these prevailing circumstances, Runyal joined as Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri in the month of May 1998. Incidents of minority killings by the militants and its subsequent aftermath had widened the gap between District administration and the public as also between the communities. However, after joining, he tried to establish rapport with public and succeeded in winning their confidence. Even during grave situations, he succeeded in developing complete synergy with Police, Security Forces and Army. The local Police and Civil administration functioned as a unit. On 19th Feb 1999, militant killed 20 Hindu villagers in Bal Jaralan, Khorbani in Rajouri and Bharyana villages in Udhampur District. These types of incidents further increased the communal tension and the brunt of public wrath in such a communally surcharged atmosphere was directed against his person primarily being the representative of the State Government as also belonging to the majority community. As a reaction to this dastardly act, despite handing over the Rajouri town to the Army and plugging all routes leading to the town, an agitated crowd of about five thousand gathered at Dhangri village and put the dead bodies on the road as a mark of protest. Bashir Ahmed along with Shri K. Rajendra, the then D.I.G. Police, after a tough and long discussion could succeed in convincing the mob to disperse and hand over the dead bodies to the relatives for last rites. Besides this, the border skirmishes and it's after effects as well as Kargil war and its impact on border areas was an uphill task which was accomplished with the help of coordination with local Police and Army. With concerted efforts, of course, in collaboration with Police authorities he was able to discourage migration from border areas even during heavy shelling. During his tenure as Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, an incident of killing of an Imam in Ghambir Moughlan area of the District triggered serious law and order problem. The sequence of events which followed the incident, in the words of Runyal are recapped, as under;

"With a view to defuse the surcharged atmosphere, I along with the incumbent Deputy Superintendent of Police Rajouri visited the spot of occurrence. On our way back, after assessing the situation and assuring the people of the area of providing full protection to their lives, an ambush was laid which if executed would have resulted in heavy

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causalities. But somehow, we came to know about their plan through a local source of mine. Though we had an escort of about 20 Police personnel with us, but being in the vulnerable location, we were all in danger of losing lives. Here again the good will earned during handling public issues and also my habit of cultivating local sources of information came to our rescue. We made human chain of about 150 people who volunteered to help us and escorted us on foot safely up to around 2 Kms. Despite the fact that miscreants tried to distract public attention by setting one house belonging to a village Chowkidar on fire, the public escorting us did not pay any heed to their nefarious design and remained with us undeterred. Ultimately, we boarded vehicles after reaching Kotli Kalaban - a safe zone. After few months some Police personnel were ambushed and killed in the same area."

His assignment as Deputy Commissioner Anantnag in the year 2001, was also full of challenges. Despite being hotspot from insurgency point of view, conducting of Assembly Elections was a mammoth and gigantic task. The importance of this election can be gauged from the fact that a senior I.A.S. Officer from MP cadre was appointed as observer six months before the date of elections, and in all as many as 13 observers were appointed by Election Commission of India to oversee the smooth conduct of various processes of the election. About 5000 poll personnel drawn from UP and Punjab were deployed for the election. Each Polling Station was manned by two polling personnel one each from within and outside the State. Sufficient number of Central Para Military Forces were deployed for providing proximate security to polling stations, personal security to candidates and proximate security to election rallies. This was in addition to the State Police personnel deployed for law and order and election related duties. The Army was also providing area security in vulnerable areas. The main problem was the untrained staff drawn from outside the State. At some places, even senior people such as Assistant Professors of Colleges were appointed as Polling Officer in order to facilitate the non-Urdu knowing Presiding Officers. However, despite apprehensions of sabotage from militants, the election in the District was conducted smoothly baring one incident of grenade explosion in an interior area, where voting was under way, but there were no casualties. By and large the elections in the District were conducted peacefully, of course, under tremendous pressure.

The narrative in respect of Bashir Ahmed Runyal would be incomplete without highlighting the role played by him in handling relief operations in his capacity as 'Commissioner, Earthquake Operations Uri'. On October 8, 2005, a strong earthquake of the magnitude of 7.6 shook

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the entire Kashmir region, along with sections of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. More than 80,000 people perished as a result of the quake, while an estimated 4 million others were left homeless. The worst affected areas in the State of Jammu and Kashmir were the Districts of Poonch, Baramulla, Jammu, Udhampur, Ramban, Kathua, Srinagar, Budgam, Anantnag, Pulwama and Kupwara. During this period, Bashir Ahmed Runyal was posted as Relief Commissioner (Migrant), Jammu. On 9th of Oct 2005, he was asked to report to the Divisional Commissioner's office Srinagar for assisting and monitoring the relief operations. But after three days, he was appointed as Commissioner, Earthquake Operations Uri, and was dropped there by helicopter. After taking stock of the situation on ground, he reviewed the systems in place in dealing with distribution of ration and other essential items, assessed immediate requirement of bare minimum relief in terms of medicines, food grains, shelter, medical treatment of injured persons and also some immediate succor to the families who had suffered fatalities. In order to know the real picture of devastation done and the steps taken by the administration in order to mitigate sufferings of the affected people, further details are elaborated in his words as follows;

"The Uri Sub-division hosts a population of about 115 thousand. The area bordering POK was completely devastated and turned into rubbles. All the houses and other buildings were flattened and destroyed and those standing had developed severe cracks. Due to aftershocks many houses crumbled later and became unsafe for habitation. More than 514 people lost their lives in this area. At number of places many of human bodies were buried alive under the huge mass of debris. Agricultural fields had developed deep cracks and the irrigation channels had been clogged. The worst affected area was from Uri to Kaman Post. The 17.2 km long stretch of road, from Uri, Salamabad to Kaman post was totally damaged and washed away completely at number of places. Culverts, bridges and other infrastructures was damaged. It was in this sector of road that 66 Beacon personnel, who were at work, got killed during the earthquake. Almost total stretch of the highway had developed cracks along and across its entire length from Uri to Kaman Post. The main bridges, which had been damaged, included those of Red Bridge, Jhula Bridge, Twin Bridge and the Aman Setu. The most damaged bridge was the Aman Setu where one abutment on the POK side and one panel of 70 m in length was completely destroyed. The most devastated ridges include those at Sultan Daki, Kamalkot on the right bank of the Jhelum River.

"The Army initially being the first responder played

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commendable role in the relief work at some places in Uri sector under the overall command of Brigadier D. S. Hooda. The Army despite suffering losses at many places, played an important role immediately after the disaster by transporting victims to hospitals, and providing relief in the shape of food, shelter and medical assistance. The Army provided office accommodation and space in their premises to the Relief team for distribution. The Relief organisations started sending materials of immediate use to the people, such as blankets, jackets, coats, socks and shoes, and kerosene oil. Most importantly, tin sheets needed to build temporary shelters to tide over the severe winter that awaited them; were also made available by roping in some reputed NGOs. Some NGOs operated in the area with proper permission from Relief Organisation and some without any such authority. Mostly, the NGOs visited villages that were located on the main road, leaving out villages situated high up in the mountains. This practice was discontinued by seeking help from Police and Army authorities.

"The Government sanctioned relief to all the affected people, one Lakh for each person killed to the next of kin, one-month free ration of 11 kg of rice, 700 gm of sugar per person to all affected families. The Government had also sanctioned a sum of Rs. 100,000 for each damaged house payable in two instalments (Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 60,000) and also Rs 30000 per household for construction of makeshift shelters made of tin sheets. The first instalment was meant for starting construction up to plinth level followed by second instalment after obtaining certificate from Public Works (R & B) Department. Almost in all the villages, the sufferers were staying in tents provided by the Government initially and subsequently after payment of Rs 30000 per household in makeshift shelters made of tin sheets and wooden logs. The process of assessing losses and the list of sufferers was initiated before my taking over the charge through a team of officials headed by Junior Engineer and assisted by VLW, local Teacher and Patwari concerned. The local Revenue staff having details of households had also suffered losses, the Revenue record had mostly been buried in the debris of damaged houses and some had suffered personal tragedies also. Therefore, initially, without involvement of Revenue staff, the process of assessment of loss and list of sufferers was prepared in all the villages of Tehsil Uri. Services of two Additional Deputy Commissioners were placed at my disposal for early assessment and distribution of Relief. The distribution of first instalment of cash relief started from Kamalkote area, which is very close to the LOC. After symbolic distribution of Cheques; Chief Guest, the then Chief Minister, left for Srinagar and the Additional Deputy Commissioner continued

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distribution of remaining cheques. I in the meantime interacted with public and listened to their grievances. I was wonder struck to know that some cheques were distributed in the name of those people who had left the area in 1971 and their relatives received cheques on their behalf. This was a shocking revelation which forced us to stop distribution immediately. We rushed to Uri and cancelled all distributed cheques. This had landed us in a precarious situation and the faith in the assessment committee almost vanished. Here at this stage, the experience as a Revenue Officer helped me which is not expected from an officer belonging to any other service. A meeting was called which was participated by all officers i.e. the two Add Deputy Commissioners, Sub-divisional Magistrate, Tehsildar and Naib Tehsildars. The main issue was not about the quantum of loss due to earthquake, as almost all the houses in Uri and its adjoining areas were razed to ground, but about the authenticity of the list of sufferers. All the buildings had flattened and practically it was not possible to ascertain the title of actual house owner. So, the following decisions were taken:-

i. Since the Choolabandi (Chowkidara Register) available with respective Patwaris were mostly got buried and damaged, as such it was ordered to bring voter list from Baramullah to be used as authentic document for preparation of list of sufferers. It is in place to mention here that in the beginning of 2005, an intensive door to door revision of electoral rolls was conducted and the details of house owners with house numbers was recorded therein. Therefore, this was treated as the most authentic and latest record available. It was decided to prepare computerised list of the sufferers on the basis of voter list within three days and then get the same verified on spot by the team headed by Tehsildar/Naib Tehsildars of respective areas. The lists were published through Lamberdars and Chowkidars and variations noticed were rectified accordingly.

ii. The assessment teams earlier constituted as per the orders of the Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, which included even non-Revenue Department officials, was replaced by purely Revenue officials.

iii. Since the distribution of relief was to be made simultaneously at many villages by the Additional Deputy Commissioners/ Sub-divisional Magistrate, it was consciously decided to prepare village wise register in which besides the name of sufferers, the cheque details were also to be recorded, besides adhering to the cumbersome job of preparing cash book on daily basis. The

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details of all payments made in a village were consolidated at village level. This method helped us in reconciling village wise payments with the bank later on. It was decided to prepare a register village wise and beneficiary wise in which, the detail of cash paid through cheques of first instalment, incentive amount paid for construction of tin sheds was recorded and provision for payment of 2nd instalments was also kept therein.

"This innovative deviation from the established procedure in vogue helped in quick and transparent disposal of relief distribution and maintenance of record. Later on, computerised copies of village wise distribution of relief were prepared with certificate regarding authenticity of list of sufferers and signatures right from Patwari concerned up to Sub-divisional Magistrate and Additional Deputy Commissioner level were obtained. Since the distribution of relief was made through 'Payees Account' cheques, the verification from J&K Bank became easy. This way, the entire account of relief of more than 100 Crores in respect of Uri got verified and adjusted by the Audit Party without any observations, whereas in other Districts the adjustment of accounts reportedly attracted audit paras.

"During the process of relief distribution, to resolve disputes among the co-sharers, the Hon'ble High Court issued directions for on spot settlement of disputes. This process was somehow hijacked by advocates, who without the consent of the Relief Organisation got number of adverse orders passed in Lok Adalat. This matter was later on brought to the notice of higher authorities with some startling facts and figures which was taken note of and a Committee was constituted to review these cases. We as a team worked day and night and accomplished the task assigned to us. My team deserved appreciation and recognition, by the Government, of their tireless efforts in mitigating the plight of sufferers and I also submitted my recommendations accordingly for sanctioning of award in favour of three senior subordinates. This request was not heeded to. My team got dejected ostensibly ignoring the merit demonstrating the implicit bias and explicit favouritism. It was the Government of India, of its own judgement on the basis of reports of Central Agencies and report of Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, that our team was awarded, the 'PM Award for Excellence in Public Administration'. The award includes a medal, scroll and a cash amount of Rs. 5 lakhs to our team. This was not only a psychological consolation for us, but an honour to get this prestigious award being the first recipient of such National Award from the Jammu and Kashmir State for the year 2006."

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On the eve of his posting to the parent department as Commissioner cum Secretary Revenue in the year March 2012, he intended to bring certain improvements in the then prevailing set up of the department, which are detailed in the words of Runyal, as under: -

"I started working on number of issues, the prominent among them were two important matters, namely formulation of Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy and implementation of report on creation of administrative units. I prepared a detail draft of J & K State Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy but could not get it approved because of my untimely transfer. Same was the fate of implementation of report on creation of administrative units. My proposal was quite implementable and without much financial implications. After creation of eight new Districts, three Revenue Sub-Divisions and twelve new Tehsils in the State in 2006, the Government constituted a Committee for demarcation of geographical boundaries of these newly created administrative units vide GO No. 947-GAD of 2006 dated 31-07-2006. The report was submitted to the Government within the time schedule. But the Government received representations from the public which prompted the Government to constitute a new Committee vide Government Order No. 221-GAD of 2007 dated 01-03-2007 renamed as "Committee for Examination of Demands for New Administrative Units" vide Government Order No. Rev-101 of 2007, dated 22-03-2007, which inter alia contained its terms of reference also. Finally, the Committee submitted the report to the Government in July 2011. The report was compiled in two parts - Part-I dealing with recommendations for creation of new administrative units viz Sub-divisions, Tehsils, Niabats and C.D. Blocks and Part-II relating to rationalization, re-organisation and creation of Patwar Halqas in the State. When I joined as Commissioner Secretary, Revenue Department, in March 2012, I got access to the said report and as a matter of curiosity as well as part of duty, put the process in motion. I examined the operative part of the report pertaining to Revenue department in detail and after considering all factors, especially, the financial constraints of the Government, a comprehensive proposal was drafted for creation of about 30 Tehsils by rationalisation and corresponding re-designation of posts of Tehsildars of Agrarian Reforms and Settlement Organisation which would not have entailed any financial implications on the State exchequer. A proposal was also drafted to rationalise the staff of all existing as also the newly proposed Tehsils and Sub-divisions and, so far as I remember, there was hardly any new creation of staff involved in the process. The proposal was also discussed with authorities at the helm of affairs in the Department much to the chagrin of the political

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personalities. This irritated few influential people and it was taken as an offence. After some time, I was shifted from the Department. Later on, we have seen creation of administrative units in utter disregard even to the recommendations of the Committee constituted for the purpose. At places where not even Niabat was existing, new Tehsils were sanctioned and the worst as also the saddest part is that in some cases, creation of two Tehsils were ordered in one Niabat and in some cases Sub-divisions were created at Niabat level without creation of a Tehsil. The new Tehsils at many places had two or three Patwar Halqas".

The views of Shri Runyal in respect of present day working in the Revenue Department, are reproduced hereunder:

"Let me share my feelings about Revenue Department in which, I served for more than 25 years, 3/4th of my service career. The importance of land administration has become very customary with complete disregard to the present-day requirements. Though some of the drawbacks are system generated but many problems which have crept into the system are man-made and for not keeping up the pace with new requirements and technologies etc. At present the functionaries of Revenue Department seem to be over-burdened with host of other regulatory and developmental works which are assigned to them from time to time. In the post-independence period, neglect of land administration has continued for several reasons. To my mind following specific grounds are responsible for deterioration in the land administration.

i. The share of income from land Revenue in the overall State resources kept on declining, thus reducing any incentive, the State had to keep records up to date. With decline in the importance of Land Revenue vis-à-vis over all income of the State, maintenance of Land Records too lost its significance both amongst administrators and politicians causing tremendous harm to rural communities.

ii. The staff looking after the land administration was allotted other multifarious duties; administrative, regulatory and developmental such as conduct of general elections, issue of various certificates, implementing and monitoring development schemes, and providing relief in natural calamities.

iii. New programs were taken up in land administration, such as implementation of land reforms, and distribution of ceiling surplus land and house-sites to the poor, which diverted

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attention of the staff from the routine; resulting the vital function of maintaining land records became the biggest casualty.

iv. Revenue Department has been put in the non-plan category; with the result no new plan activity was undertaken with a view to modernise the Department.

v. There is no administrative or political pressure on the Revenue Officers to up-date land records or dispose of court cases in time bound manner. Long pendency of cases, in fact, suits the local lawyers, who are politically powerful, which also come in the way of quick disposal of cases. It is unfortunate that the system has developed perverse incentives. Poor governance and distortion in priorities, rather than technical capacity, is the main factor in deteriorating land administration. Lack of accountability has provided opportunities for unauthorized changes in land records. This leads to litigation which is expensive and time consuming.

vi. It is observed that at many places Settlement operations have been going on for more than decades without any tangible output. Satisfactory completion of the task has blurred owing to gradual erosion in work-culture. The field staff with scant survey skills has become insensitive and lax. Of course, for obtaining better results, maintenance of the land record has to be done in the same time-tested manner as was done in the age of Todar Mal, centuries ago, but actually it is not happening.

vii. Land mafias, political pressure and also the ulterior motives have led to the deterioration in the maintenance of land records.

viii. Virtual monopoly of Patwaris over the land records has to be checked. At present records are not open to the general public in real sense. Many a times farmers have to face harassment at the hands of village officials and they are subjected to extortion not only for obtaining abstracts of land records, but also in processing requests for change in title of land. Unwarranted delays in providing services, if at all provided, are common. Though on many occasions the delay might be unintentional; but many times, such delays are intentional and ill-motivated.

ix. Land records contain various useful data like soil, irrigation, cropping pattern etc. All such data is very valuable for various administrative purposes. As data is manually maintained, it is not possible to collate and analyse such data in meaningful way."

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Bashir Ahmed Runyal superannuated from service on 31 March 2014. He had a strong desire to remain in public life, and in fact, during initial few years after his retirement, he remained associated with active politics of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. However, with the changed circumstances, although he has kept himself aloof of active politics, but he is still active in public service as a 'Free-lance-Social Worker'. He is always available to the people of his area in the hour of need, in any circumstances what so ever. In the closing session of our sittings in connection with this book, he remarked, "A new journey after retirement has begun. Successfully navigating with the coming events is another universal challenge for the retirees to face. The road ahead is almost clear and the terrain on which I have started my journey is equally challenging. This is my second chapter in life which I have willfully chosen. Let us hope for the best."

One can only wish him good luck in all his future adventures.



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KHAWAJA BASHIR AHMED

Son of an ex-civil servant, Khawaja Bashir Ahmed, was born on 27th of December 1950 in Srinagar of Kashmir Valley. His father, Khwaja Ghulam Mohammad joined what was then known as the Kashmir Civil Service, and after serving the State Government for about 35 years in various capacities, including Secretary to Government Health Department, Education Department, Secretary to the Sadr-I- Riyasat (later called as Governor) of Jammu and Kashmir State, finally retired on superannuation from the post of Secretary to Government Ladakh Affairs and Social Welfare Department in the year 1966. Family of Bashir Ahmed originally belonged to village Gund Khawaja Qasim (Named after his ancestors) of District Baramulla Kashmir. His father spent major part of life at Srinagar, initially in connection with studies and subsequently in service of the State. His father (Bashir's grandfather) was a farsighted person and was very much concerned about education of his children even during those times when most of the society had little or no education. Essentially, Bashir's father was also quite particular that his children should receive quality education. Bashir Ahmed received his initial education from Burn Hall Higher Secondary School Srinagar - one of the famous educational institution of the times in the city. One of the remarkable things that he imbibed from his School was the culture of diversity. In those times Army did not have network of their own Schools and therefore the wards of the Army Officers would be studying in the same School. The students belonged to various parts of the country and represented all the regions of the country. This was one of the most important traits that he acquired in his School. Although the School was run by Christian Missionaries, but it was very secular in outlook and the same was passed on to the students as well.

After an exciting School life, he joined Sri Pratap College Srinagar. According to Bashir Ahmed the journey through Graduation in the College was without any excitement and a sense of achievement. As compared to the number of students (around 6000) the available infrastructure in the college was quite insufficient, and the College management was forced to

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run classes in two shifts with average class size of 60-70 students, out of which 80% were not serious about their studies. He did his Graduation in the year 1971, and then did Master's Degree in Zoology from Kashmir University in the year 1974 in First class. However, he terms the University education for the Post Graduation as a different cup of tea. With the availability of a very well stocked Library and some highly talented teachers, it was the real feel of how to go about studying your subject with large quantity of study material in the form of text books, journals, reviews etc. Thus, the years in the University were very important in shaping future character.

Between the University and professional career there was a gap of around two and a half years which, according to Bashir Ahmed, was per force utilised in reading books both fiction and non-fiction by famous writers like Ernest Hemmingway, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, Saul Bellow, Graham Greene etc. In addition, the subject of World War II was a matter of great interest to him; as it had engulfed almost whole world involving countries from all the continents and cost more than 60 million lives in the saga of human folly and sacrifice; which left a very deep impact on his life and made him a strong pacifist.

In the year 1974, when the State Public Service Commission sought applications for 'Combined Services Competitive Examination', Bashir Ahmed availed the opportunity. At the close of year 1977, when result was declared, his name figured in the list of selected candidates; while as out of the total lot of 32 candidates, he along with seven others was allotted 'Revenue Gazetted Service', one of the important components of the Combined Services. Thereafter, the selected Officers were sent to the Revenue Training Institutes for training; the four officers belonging to the Valley were allotted to the Institute at Srinagar. He had once shared few important events which, did leave deep imprints on the mind of young Bashir Ahmed and helped in his shaping and becoming a competent Revenue Officer, which of course, would be evident from the heights he reached in his service career; the same are restated, in his own words, as follows;

i. "The beginning of the training was quite dramatic. For the first few days only, a peon and the four Probationary Officers attended the Institute. On certain days even, all of the officers (trainees) stayed away at home and did not attend the Institute. Then, one day the then Financial Commissioner, Sheikh Ghulam Ahmed payed a surprise visit to the Institute. He was very annoyed to find all the trainees (Tehsildar Probationers) to be absent, and left the Institute with orders that all

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should be present in his office at 10 A.M. the next day. In compliance to the directions, the next day, as soon as we were ushered into his office, he announced termination of all of us from State services. Shell-shocked none of us could utter a word. After sometime the Principal of Revenue Training Institute also entered the room and pleaded for giving one chance to the young Officers. After sometime the tension eased and some intense counselling followed wherein we were asked to be serious about the Revenue training, which would be essential if we were to be successful when formally posted as Tehsildars. This seemingly isolated event had very good result and far-reaching impact on our career. From the next day regular classes were held. The Principal, namely Shri Hakim Jawad, was a very competent Revenue Officer of his time, with vast experience in Settlement work; with which he had remained actively associated, when Settlement work was going on in the District of Baramulla in fifties of the past century. He took our training very seriously and classes would sometimes extend to 8 P.M. in the evening. This is just to point out as to what impact a simple inspection and timely advice can have on the career of young Officers. The whole training period would have gone waste in absence of this single incident. Needless to say, that a mock Settlement was conducted complete from measurement stage to the formulation of 'Misil-e-Hakiat' (Record-of-Rights) including the Settlement Report. The Revenue training was followed by stints with Police, Judiciary, Taxation and Development Departments etc."

ii. "After completion of the training, for a short period of about one month, till our posting orders were issued, we were attached with the then Agrarian Reforms Commissioner Shri Ghulam Mustafa Khan, who was a Revenue Officer of the old school. His Special Assistant Shri Shiv Jee Bhat (an Officer of the rank of Assistant Commissioner Revenue) was a very competent and honest Officer, who had risen to that position from a Patwari, solely by dint of his hard work and exceptional efficiency. He was very hardworking and spent a lot of time in sharing with us his rich experiences at various levels that he had served in the Department. He prepared the probationers as much as it was possible to do. It gave us a fair idea as to what challenges lie ahead when posted in the field."

In the month of October 1979, when the phase of training and the period of probation came to be over, the officers were posted in the field. Initially none of them was directly given territorial posting but were assigned the job of Agrarian Reforms. Accordingly, Bashir Ahmed, happened to be posted as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Chadoora, District Budgam. However, after his being posted as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Chadoora, the Territorial Tehsildar of the Tehsil retired within a couple of

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months of his posting there and he landed to hold both the charges; he held both the assignments for a period of around four years - quite a long stay on administrative postings like that of a Tehsildar. His impressions and varied experiences in this context are related, in his own words, as under;

i. "A Tehsildar has wide ranging functions, some written and many by convention. A Tehsildar draws his main strength from the State Land Revenue Act by virtue of which he is classified as Assistant Collector class 1 and is the head of the Land Revenue administration in the Tehsil. Under the 'Code of Criminal Procedure' he is designated as Executive Magistrate of first class and assigned the powers for maintenance of law and order within the administrative jurisdiction of the Tehsil. Being the main administrative officer in a Tehsil, he is also responsible for coordination and supervision over various field departments of the Government. Although with the State increasingly taking up large number of measures concerning welfare activities, other activities related to development and provision of infrastructure; the public grievances would invariably land at the office of Tehsildar. This was a historical legacy and the people's expectations for the redressal of grievances still rest with this office. Besides, there are some crucial functions in which Tehsildar and the Tehsil are very important. The democratic process is dependent of electoral rolls, which are maintained and up-dated through the Tehsil office. Irrespective of the fact that the Tehsildar is holding any statuary responsibility under the Election laws or not, the main burden of smooth conduct of elections lies on him."

ii. "The planning process in the development of the country is dependent upon the collection of data. In this connection crop estimation are essential components and the Revenue Department has a major role to play in this context."

iii. "Population Census is one of the important periodical operations for which again the Tehsil is a key office. Not long after my joining the Tehsil as Tehsildar, the preliminary operation for Census 1981 were initiated. We were given to understand that the Tehsil reporting first would be eligible for 'President's Gold Medal for Census'. At that young age it was quite an incentive. So, we went about it in quite earnest. We were very much in the race for the Gold Medal. In the process, however, while perusing the records, I noticed that a report from a certain area of my Tehsil indicated a sizeable scheduled cast population. I immediately became suspicious and on cross checking, it was found to be wrong. Valuable time was lost in verifying and rectifying the report. By the time

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the verified report was sent we lost the race for the Gold and had to settle for a Silver Medal."

iv. "Livestock Census is also another periodic exercise in which the institution of Tehsildar has got a definite and defined role. In one of those years, a Livestock Census was scheduled. On the completion of the field work while perusing the report in respect of a particular village, it was observed that the enumerator had shown a large number of Merino Sheep. I was astonished to find that the Australian Sheep were present in such a large number in an area not known for Sheep breeding. So, we decided that before the report is finalized let us have a personal look at the livestock of such a progressive village. The concerned Officer from the Sheep Husbandry Department was a bit reluctant to go to the village. Nevertheless, we went there and to our surprise found not a single sheep of any breed in the village."

v. "One of the important or may say the basic function of the Tehsil is up-dating of Revenue Records and conduct of Girdawari. So, I started village wise inspection. To my horror I found hundreds of mutations entered but not attested. In one of the villages I found a mutation entered in the year 1935, still pending disposal. When the Patwaris were asked the reason for so many mutations being un-attested, they reported that in majority number of cases nobody from the interested parties was coming forward. Finding the answer not plausible, I decided to take cognizance of all the pending mutations of the Patwar Halqa. Besides deciding few mutations during that very visit, 4-5 special camps in quick succession were held for the said purpose. After taking into confidence the Nambardars, Chowkidars and other respectables of the area, I conducted summary enquiry in each case and disposed of around five hundred such mutations; which of course included the one mutation entered in the year 1935 (disposed of in the year 1981). In the process, in some cases where beneficiary parties were not present, mutation fee, although charged as per prescribed rates, could not be realised. Later on, however, while depositing the mutations sheets (foil) with Office Qanungo in Tehsil office, the shortfall in realization of mutation fee had to be borne by me from my own pocket."

vi. "In late 70's and early 80's of the past century food self-sufficiency was important program of the Government and the Tehsils were assigned targets for procurement of Paddy for the public distribution system. It was supposed to be a voluntary purchase by the Government but as the rate offered by the Government was far less than the market rate the farmers were very reluctant to sell their produce for

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PDS. The advance payment for purchase of paddy used to be made somewhere in September and continued till November. All the land owners were directed to assemble at the Nambardar's house and there would be a lot of discussion and coercion for the distribution of advance money. Some of the land owners, who would remain absent from the camps, had to be summoned to Tehsil offices and various methods even those not always covered by the law of the land were used to induce the farmers to accept the money. The next step would be to ensure that the grains are deposited in the stores of Food and Supply Department, which would be specially set up for the purpose. A daily report had to be submitted to the government about the progress achieved. There were many land owners who would avoid depositing the grains. In such cases recourse was taken to the recovery processes as provided in the Land Revenue Act, including sometimes resorting to arrest and detention of the defaulters. The arrests sometimes led to Habeas Corpus petitions. In a couple of cases, detention came to be challenged and many a times had to face tough time in explaining the same before the Hon'ble High Court. After the paddy season was over it would be found that sizable amounts of money were still with the farmers on account of the money distributed over several years. The recovery of this money would take a lot of time and energy throughout the year. Moreover, this whole process has no place in the 'Daily Dairy' submitted monthly by the Tehsildars. Although one would try to combine other revenue works with the procurement of paddy, but it was not always possible to do so in view of the different nature of the works being attended by a Tehsildar."

"This procurement process would also create a lot of resentment against the Tehsil administration. One particular incident will illustrate the negative impact of the process on the whole Tehsil administration."

"During the procurement season an opposition political party organised dharna throughout the State highlighting various issues. In Tehsil Chadoora, one day the party used procurement issue to mobilise support and as soon as the staff entered the office the whole complex was surrounded. Initially there was slogan shouting, but suddenly the mob started ransacking the office and damaging furniture. The small Police presence just melted away sensing trouble. The violence continued for some time till Police reinforcement came and an order was restored. As a follow-up, all the ring leaders were got arrested who spent quite some time in detention. One of the leaders who had been a Minister earlier and later again was a senior Member in the Government also spent almost 30 days in prison before he was bailed out."

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"Later the procurement business lost steam and the dignity of the Tehsil was restored to a large extent."

Few more events of importance, shared by Bashir Ahmed on certain occasions, which may be of interest to the readers of new generation, are narrated in the following paragraphs.

"Those days, implementation of Agrarian Reforms was a flagship program of the Government and there was a lot of pressure from Government to complete the process of conferring proprietary rights upon the tenants over the land they were cultivating continuously since Kharif 1971, of course, after payment of nominal levy as prescribed under relevant rules. This put a great emphasis on Girdawari of the year 1971 for ascertaining possession over the land. Once the process was initiated it was found that entries both in the tenancy column and the ownership column needed a lot of vigil as people were trying to clandestinely legalise transfer of land under the garb of land reforms. As such, in order to minimise such rackets, camps used to be held in villages. As during day time, people would be often out on work, therefore, to ensure maximum presence of the stake holders, evening or night camps were often organised and single mutation attested for the whole village. Besides, in order to ensure transparency, the entries in mutation register were read aloud. So, one had to spend lot of time including Sundays and holidays in the field. But one had also to ensure that normal Tehsil work does not suffer. So, the Tehsildar had to do balancing act between the Financial Commissioner, who would insist on normal revenue work, while the Agrarian Reforms Commissioner would put pressure for the Agrarian Reforms work."

However, notwithstanding all the challenges, hard work by Khawaja Bashir Ahmed bore fruit and the Tehsil Chadoora achieved number one position in the State in terms of vesting land to the State and then after realisation of prescribed levy, conferring ownership rights upon the prospective owners.

Powers under various sections of the Cr. P.C. like sections 145, and 147 stood vested with the Executive Magistrates in respect of lands covered under the Agrarian Reforms Act 1976. It was roughly mid-1981, when in a certain village (situate just around village Hayatpora of Tehsil Chadoora) a dispute over a piece of land took a very ugly turn. On receiving a message from Police of the concerned area the Tehsildar rushed to the spot. Although, as per his sources the situation on spot was very tense yet, taking risk, he went to the spot without any Police escort as he had the information that the people were particularly angry with the

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"partisan" attitude of the Police. However, taking risk helped to ease the situation. After having discussion with the ring leaders, two sides moved away from each other and the crowd dispersed, but both the parties stuck to the claim for their possessions over the piece of land. Therefore, recourse was taken under section 145 Cr. P. C., and the land in dispute was attached and the situation was saved.

Around the same period, as a corollary to the above discussed matter, there arose another dispute regarding the right of way in an adjoining village, where action under section 147 of Cr. P. C. was initiated. The order came to be challenged in the court of learned District Judge, who held that the Executive Magistrate lacked jurisdiction under section 147 Cr. P. C. and moved a reference to the Hon'ble High Court for striking down the order. It seemed the District Court was kept in the dark about the amendment in the Cr. P. C. empowering Executive Magistrates to hear and dispose of disputes relating to lands as defined in the Agrarian Reforms Act 1976. Needless to say, that the order was upheld in the High Court and the reference rejected.

Similarly, maintenance of law and order was still a primary function of the Tehsildar for which, he was subordinate to the District Magistrate. Chadoora was a politically very volatile Tehsil, where there was strong presence of a National party which was in apposition in the State at that time and there were regular clashes and protests against the Government; the town of Chrar-i-Sharif was especially one such spot. It was probably the month of December 1982 (a period immediately before 1983 Assembly Elections), when all of a sudden protest started in the town. At that time Bashir Ahmed the Tehsildar was outside headquarter, and when he received a message that violent clashes were going on in the town and that the Deputy Commissioner who reached on spot had to take refuge in the Fire Station complex. The town had a very typical topography and the mob took position on heights around the town, making it very difficult for the Police to do anything as they were confined to lower ground. It is well known that the institution of Tehsildar still has credibility in the public mind. As soon as the Tehsildar reached the town, the crowd allowed him entry without any resistance. The pelting of stones stopped and after a dialogue with the protestors, the Deputy Commissioner and the Tehsildar were able to defuse the situation.

In this context it would be important to note that in dealing with such situations, personal rapport and reputation of a Revenue officer play very vital and critical role.

Chadoora Tehsil has always been a hot spot during elections. It

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comprises two Assembly Constituencies, namely Chadoora and Chrar-i-Sharif. During 1983 Assembly Elections, on the election day around noon Bashir Ahmed, who was Tehsildar (Executive Magistrate) and Assistant Returning Officer for Chadoora Constituency, got the news that a polling booth had been captured by supporters of one of the candidates, as also that the other candidate on reaching the spot had started protesting, besides taking hostage the S.H.O. and the Police party. On verifying the information regarding the situation, he along with the Sector Officer Police (Dy S. P.) proceeded to the spot. On spotting the party near the village, a violent crowd started rushing towards them menacingly with sticks and stones in their hands, but as soon as they saw the Tehsildar they lowered the sticks and dropped stones, rather they explained what had happened and pleaded for strict action against wrong doers. The Tehsildar after giving a patient hearing assured them that re-poll will be got done at the booth with adequate Police presence and fair poll would be ensured. The S.H.O. along with Police personnel were rescued and the situation saved from turning ugly. On returning to headquarter, the matter was taken up with concerned authorities and under the order issued by Election Commission of India, re-poll for the said polling booth was held in quite a peaceful atmosphere.

After the polling process was over, the candidate whose supporters had captured the booth was quite confident of his victory. On the day of counting of ballot papers when the counting was going on, at one point of time the candidate was informed by his supporters that he was trailing. He suddenly entered the Counting Hall, took out a pistol and his counting agents attempted to tear ballot papers. It seemed that their act was a pre-planned move to create a situation of chaos leading to get the election cancelled. But before anything untoward could happen the Tehsildar grabbed his hand and called in the Police; he was escorted out of the Hall and counting continued smoothly thereafter.

After Chadoora, Bashir Ahmed got even more sensitive assignment with his posting as Tehsildar Nazool Srinagar,where he had to deal with delicate issues concerning Nazool lands. But above all he had to deal with some serious law and order situations, as Executive Magistrate, which are recounted, in his own words as follows;

i. "Law and order duties of the Tehsildar do consume a considerable amount of time which cannot be quantified and therefore does form part of any achievement when bringing down the work on papers. In those days a Magistrate would play a buffer between the crowd or mob and the Police. In order to illustrate this point, one important

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incident comes to my mind which I had to face during law and order problem in Srinagar. The then Chief Minister of the State, who was also active with the Opposition Conclave at the National level had been attacked during a rally in Uttar Pradesh. The ruling party in the State organised a bandh in Srinagar. I was deployed as Executive Magistrate in a very sensitive area of Srinagar city. Around 11 A.M. a procession comprising about 4000 people came towards the Police Station. A company strength of Armed Police had been deployed outside the Police Station. Seeing the Police presence, the mob started pelting stones. The Police got over-powered and withdrew into the Police Station. Now the Police Station itself was threatened. I remained outside the Police Station and raised my hand to signal the crowd to stop pelting stones and then I moved towards the crowd. After some deliberations and assurances, the crowd dispersed without any further incident in the area."

ii. "The most serious law and order situation which I had to deal pertains to year 1984, when the then Chief Minister was dismissed after defection in his party. Ignoring retaliation from Police, people in a very angry mood were out in streets. Seeing the seriousness of the situation I rushed to the Central Police Control Room for further instructions. To my surprise, other than the Divisional commissioner and the Deputy commissioner, I was the only civilian officer present in the P.C.R. As soon as I arrived I was instructed by the Director General Police and the Divisional Commissioner to accompany the Police in an armored vehicle to go around the city and announce curfew. The re-enforcement of the Police in the city had yet to be made. I was seated in the vehicle between a Police Officer of S. P's rank and the driver. As soon as we moved out of the P.C.R there were huge and angry crowds in the streets shouting slogans and looking at easy targets. We moved throughout the city for more than 3 hours announcing curfew and warning strict actions against the defaulters. In absence of sufficient deployment these words did not have much meaning but sensing the business-like tone in which the announcement was being made, we were hardly able to move through the city without getting attacked or hurt. The curfew would continue in the city for more than 2 months. In fact, for that matter the Government was nicknamed as 'Curfew Government'."

iii. "A few months later there were the Parliamentary Elections. Needless to say, that the campaign was very bitter. The ruling party sensing defeat had made plans to disrupt the counting process. After contesting every vote and every ballot box they seemed to sense certain defeat and tried to destroy the ballot papers. I was on the tabulation job and I along with couple of other officers stood between the table and the

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counting agents rushing towards us to snatch the tabulation sheets. We protected the table by standing between the papers till the Police entered and restored order. The situation was compounded by the fact the party had planted around 5 to 7 persons on each table in connivance with independent candidates in addition to their own agents."

Bashir Ahmed got his first elevation to be inducted into Kashmir Administrative Service (K. A. S.) in the year 1986, and thereafter he was posted as Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Kupwara. In this cadre, his other assignments were, Assistant Commission in the office of Vigilance Commissioner, Sub-divisional Magistrate Srinagar, Deputy Sales Tax Commissioner (Administration) Kashmir, Director Finance in Finance Department, Deputy Secretary Planning, Special Assistant to Chief Secretary (four years) and finally Additional/Special Secretary to the Chief Minister (six years); before, in the year 2002, he was picked up for a higher responsibility and appointed as Deputy Commissioner Budgam. After serving at Budgam for a period of around two and a half years, he got his next posting as Special Secretary Finance Department and finally he was posted as Commissioner Commercial Taxes Jammu and Kashmir State, wherefrom he retired on superannuation on 31st of March 2011, after serving there for a long period of five and a half years.

Before concluding narrative in respect of Khawaja Bashir Ahmed, it may be added that after having personally experienced the glamour and glory of the Revenue Department in the prime of his life, he feels disappointed to find steep decline in the working of the present day set up in the Department, and he attributes the same mainly to following factors namely;

i. With the Government taking role of the Welfare State more and more departments have come into being wherefrom direct benefits accrue to the people. The Revenue Department does not figure in most of these activities.

ii. The complex and obsolete system of maintenance of revenue records has become cause of hard ships for the people, even in obtaining copies of such records, which also led to lot of corruption; it alienated them from the department.

iii. The up-dation of records did not take place for long period of time. As a result, the record and the factual position on spot did not match causing great difficulty and anxiety among land holders.

iv. The Deputy Commissioner who is head of the Revenue

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administration became more and more associated with development works and less and less with Revenue work. Giving more importance by the Deputy Commissioners to the role of District Development Commissioner over his primary fictions has been a great setback to the working of Revenue Department.

v. With the abolition of Land Revenue, the basic function of the Revenue Department has changed to a large extent. The Land Revenue Act, which is the 'Bible' of the Department lays all stress on assessment of Land Revenue and collection thereof, which is no more there. So, the whole system seems to have become obsolete and the management of land has to be re-looked, without which the present system is not geared up to meet the ground realities.

In this connection, he has following suggestion to make;

"The States like Karnataka, Gujrat and Andhra Pradesh have already taken steps in the direction of bringing alterations and improvements in the working of Revenue Department in view of the changed conditions. It is imperative that a study group is formulated to examine the best practices in the country, which can then be implemented with appropriate modifications to meet specific requirements of Jammu and Kashmir. The Department can no longer exist in the present form and it is advisable to merge it with a development department like Rural Development Department, if it has to play any positive role."

And finally, one important advice to young Revenue Officers as follows;

"Maintaining a balance between various political factions and not appearing to be aligned to any group is of utmost importance for a Revenue Officer for smooth running of the administration."

Khawaja Bashir Ahmed had a bright service career and during the journey of more than thirty-three years, he was inducted into I. A. S. with year of allotment as 1995 and promoted to 'Super Time Scale of I.A.S. (Commissioner Cadre) in the year2010. He was also honoured with prestigious 'Chief Minister's Gold Medal for Honesty/Integrity and Meritorious Public Service Award' in the year 2006. But the matter did not end here. As it is rightly said that good deeds and good wishes of elders do bring good results; in the year 2013 the Goddess of luck once again showered favours upon Bashir Ahmed, when he was appointed by the Government of India as Advisor to the Empowered Commission of States'

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Finance Ministers. It needs to be reiterated that in the final phase of his career Bashir Ahmed was posted as Commissioner Commercial Taxes and that was the time when VAT was introduced in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The progress made in implementation of VAT in the State attracted appreciations which found mention in the report of the Finance Commission headed by Dr. kelkar, an internationally renowned expert on the subject. Thereafter, as Commissioner Commercial Taxes Bashir Ahmed also remained closely associates with the formulation of model for the GST in India, and information technology platform for its implementation as also with the Committee constituted to prepare draft law for the implementation of GST. After his retirement as Commissioner Commercial Taxes, the Empowered Committee of States' Finance Ministers requisitioned his services and he became part of the implementation of GST which is considered to be the biggest tax reform in the country. The challenge of implementation of this reform was very formidable as the federal system of the country had an entirely different tax regime. The GST was formally launched on 1st July 2017 in whole country. **Till the writing of this narrative he is still holding the assignment and keeping the head of Jammu and Kashmir cadre officers quite high.**



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BISHAN DASS SHARMA

Born on 6th October 1952 in the family of Pt. Bihari Lal, father and Smt. Parvati, mother, Bishan Dass Sharma, popularly known by his short name B. D. Sharma, in his close circles also known simply as BD, grew up in a totally rural back ground. His family belonged to village Patti, part of the old Tehsil Samba, District Jammu, now part of Tehsil Bari Brahmana, District Samba. He had his initial schooling at Primary School of his village and did his Matriculation from Government High School Smailpur, located at a distance of two Kilometres from his village. Joined Government Gandhi Memorial Science College Jammu in the year 1969 and after Graduation, did his M. Sc. in Botany from Jammu University in the year 1975.

Having born in a family of traditional farmers, his reminiscences include the well-known fact that, at least up to not a very distant past employees of the Revenue Department, right from a Patwari to the Tehsildar did command a lot of respect amongst the village folk. According to B. D. Sharma they, in fact struck a lot of awe and fear in the minds of farmers. Therefore, the son of a farmer would naturally look forward to be a Revenue officer - an embodiment of authority and power to him. So, when the time came in 1977 for filling up of the form for the Combined Competitive Examination for the recruitment of Under Secretaries, Tehsildars, Deputy Superintendents of Police, Excise and Taxation Officers, Deputy Registrars Co-operative and Accounts Officers; wherein preference of service had to be given, his obvious first choice fell on the post of Tehsildar. Moreover, he had studied Urdu language up to his Matriculation standard, so the knowledge of the language, in which basic work of Revenue Department is carried out, did prove to be another inducement to opt for the Revenue Department. Although, in view of the changed climate in the educational field, by mid-sixties majority of the students in Jammu area had started opting for Hindi language, but per chance B. D. Sharma had opted to study the Urdu language which became an added advantage in his later life, particularly in the service career.

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When the result of Competitive Examination came to be declared, B. D. Sharma was fortunate enough to get through, and since he was placed at a comfortable position in the merit list, so he was able to get his first preference in the allotment of service i.e. Revenue Gazetted Service. It may not be out of place to mention here that the 'Combined Competitive Examination Rules' prevalent at that time, provided for allotment of a particular 'Service' at the time of initial recruitment itself, on the basis of option exercised by a candidate in the application form, of course, subject to other limitations as contained in the recruitment rules, and he would continue to be part of that 'Service' till he would be promoted to senior scale of K.A.S.

Here again it may be in place to add that in the past, a large number of luminaries belonging to the villages nearby to BD's village Patti had made a name in the Revenue administration. For instance, among others, Rai Bahadur Pt. Anant Ram of a nearby village had attained the highest pinnacle of the 'Masheer-e-Maal' (Revenue Minister) of the State, Major Pritam Singh had remained Governor of Jammu for many years and Pt Prem Nath Dogra had also worked as Wazir-e-Wazarat before he plunged in politics. Pt. Ram Chandra Dobey, a legend in Revenue Department was also a known figure in the locality. So, in the presence of these luminaries, becoming a Tehsildar could not be rated as something extraordinary by any stretch of imagination. However, it still carried a lot of prestige, particularly in view of the fact that it was after a long gap that someone from the rural and humble background and belonging to the Kandi belt of Jammu District was being recruited as a Tehsildar directly. In the circumstances, the success in the prestigious competition gave a lot of happiness to him and to his parents. In any case, it was an honour not only for him or his family but for the whole of the village community and it was really rejoiced individually as well as collectively.

After completion of the statutory two years' training, B.D. Sharma got his first posting as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms, Kalakot and then as Territorial Tehsildar in Tehsils like Kalakote, Nowshera and Samba till he got elevated to next higher scale. In the middle rung, among others, he got opportunity to work as Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Jammu, Collector Land Acquisition, and Additional Deputy commissioner Jammu as well. With this type of background, he was the natural choice to be posted as Deputy Commissioner of two important Districts of Poonch and Kathua, and there he performed well, as would be evident from certain achievements detailed in later part of the narrative.

B. D. Sharma vividly recalls some of his experiences during his early service career starting right from the period he remained under

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training in the Revenue Training Institute, and it would be appropriate to share the same with the readers in his own words in the following paragraphs;

i. "When the basic Revenue training started in Revenue Training Institute in the year 1977, Shri OP Bali, an officer of 1965 K.A.S. batch was posted as the Principal and Shri Prem Singh Jamwal was posted as the Vice Principal there. They took a lot of interest in imparting the basic training in Revenue laws and rules and they proved to be competent guides to unlock the nuts and bolts of the department to us. However, some of the instructors of lower rank lacked the competence and expertise to provide adequate guidance to the trainees. Since the teachers play an important role in shaping the future of their pupils, so the best of the available lot should be posted in the Training Institutes for imparting training. It has been seen that the employees who don't perform well in the field are posted in the Training Institutes so these Institutes are being treated as dumping ground for the officials unwanted in the field. It is felt that the authorities should consider employing, on regular basis, the retired officials with caliber, competence and a knack and aptitude for teaching for the purpose of imparting training to the new recruits.

"Shri Bali used to invite retired officers for sharing their experiences with the trainees and in this connection once Shri K. C. Bhagat, a retired seasoned Revenue Officer was invited who implored us to acquire proficiency in the basic Revenue work because it would only help us to shape our career properly. He alluded to an anecdote where some scholars were riding a boat and were boasting about their knowledge of different 'ology's' such as Zoology, Biology, Geology, and Sociology etc. The boatman was listening keenly to their boasts. Then in the course of journey, the boat started to face the tremors of a tempest and the boatman asked the scholars tauntingly whether they had some knowledge of 'Taireniology' (swimming) also, otherwise they would face drowning. This was very apt analogy to convey us a message that we might be very competent in our academic knowledge but the knowledge of the Revenue matters would only stand us in good stead as Revenue Officers. As such the young Revenue officers should understand that proficiency in the basic revenue work is the first requirement for becoming a successful Revenue Officer".

ii. "It is often said that on the transfer of an officer, his reputation travels fast and reaches the destination of the officer much before he reaches there. I had this pleasant experience once when I was transferred to a new place as Tehsildar. One day I received a letter in very flowery

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Persianised Urdu from a retired Teacher for getting resolved his case regarding resumption of his share of land from tenants, under the Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976. The case was lingering on for many years. The Teacher under reference later met me personally also, and after understanding his problem, I got a camp organised in the concerned area. On the fixed day I heard the case in presence of the concerned parties, and to my great surprise the parties readily agreed to my pronouncement regarding the entitlement and share of land to be got by the ex-owners and the prospective owners. I immediately got the Tatima Shajra prepared and attested the mutation there and then. I along with the staff and the applicant Teacher had to walk some distance to catch the bus back home. On the way back, the Patwari asked the Teacher that the earlier Tehsildar might also have attested the mutation on almost the similar lines, but why he didn't agree for the same and instead wasted his time in going from pillar to post telling the higher authorities of not getting justice. The Teacher didn't elaborate much on the issue then. However, after few days when the Teacher came to Tehsil office for getting copy of the mutation and conveying me thanks for ending his long ordeal, I chanced upon to question him as to why he didn't get the mutation attested earlier. He told me apologetically that he had somehow developed a feeling that the earlier Tehsildar was known for favouring the undeserving parties. His rivals had also developed access to the then Tehsildar. So, he started going to the higher authorities for getting justice. He had heard about my impartial way of doing work from his relatives living at the place of my previous posting, so he agreed to whatever decision I pronounced. My predecessor was better than me in many respects but there was one aspect where I was on a better pedestal. I could instil confidence in people of my sense of fair play, so it made a big difference in my working in the field. Whenever I recollect this incident I wonder how important role people's perception about an officer plays in running the day to day administration smoothly. The amount of faith, trust and confidence which a Revenue Officer instils in the public mind goes a long way in making his working smooth as also in settling the disputes quickly."

iii. "As young officers equipped well with modern education, we would childishly rate ourselves superior to the officers who had been promoted from the lower ranks. But the reality soon dawned upon me that experience and basic departmental knowledge played an important role than the academic qualification in performing the day to day Revenue work efficiently. At a later stage I did realise that the performance of many officers, who had risen from the ranks, was far better than us- the so

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called highly qualified directly recruited officers. During my posting as Tehsildar Samba, I happened to glance through a file in which my earlier predecessor, Thakur Kandhara Singh had passed an order. The order was much systematised, elaborate and well justified. He had written and rewritten the order six or seven times in Urdu in his own hand (he had perhaps missed to destroy the rough copies which remained attached in the file) and gradually finalized it after improving upon it again and again. I was wonderstruck to see the amount of labour he had put in writing repeatedly a single order. The quality of the order was also very exhaustive and all encompassing. We younger officers were never accustomed to working so laboriously in doing such type of work. The standards have even further deteriorated now and it is very disappointing to see that many young officers nowadays shirk even to write a small mutation order in their own hands. When we think of the amount of devotion and dedication the old guards used to put in their work; we simply find ourselves amazed."

iv. "There is another instance of an encounter with a promotion quota officer in which I was caught on the wrong foot. The then Divisional Commissioner had gone on a spot inspection and I as Assistant Commissioner and Pt. Suraj Parkash as Director Land Management, Jammu Development Authority along with other officers were accompanying him. The Divisional Commissioner wanted to know about the approximate area of a field. I started to have it seen from the Register Khasra Girdawari which obviously was going to take some time. But in the meantime, Pt. Suraj Prakash, after having a simple glimpse over the field pronounced it as measuring about three and a half Kanals. To our surprise the actual area of the field recorded in the register was found to be three Kanal and seven marlas. Everybody was highly impressed with the keen eye and observation of the old hand. Later on, it was also observed that the officer in question had colossal knowledge about the conversion of area from normal measures to metrics, the procedure and Revenue Laws, besides knowing full whereabouts and other particulars including exact dates of birth, dates of postings etc. in respect of majority of the Revenue Officers, both serving as well as retired."

v. "Not to speak of fellow officers, it was found quite earlier in service by me that even the lowly placed officials were better equipped in many respects than us, the highly placed. On my first posting as Tehsildar when a Police Officer came to get remand of an accused, I asked the peon to bring me the law book as I wanted to ascertain the cognizability or otherwise of the crimes recorded in the Police memo. I was simultaneously reading out a bit loud the different sections of Ranbir

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Penal Code recorded in the memo. The peon immediately pointed out that all the crimes recorded in the memo were cognizable and showed his confidence by not moving out to bring the law book. The peon who was on the verge of retirement had served in the judicial courts also before being posted in the Revenue Department on the separation of Executive and Judiciary. During his tenure in the judicial courts he seemed to have acquired a lot of knowledge about the criminal cases simply by hearing the arguments of advocates and the discussion of staff. The lack of knowledge on my part and the peon's proficiency on the subject did put me in a lot of embarrassment before my own eyes".

vi. "In dealing with an important case, it was noticed that the whole of the senior field agency had prepared a report favouring a particular person in somewhat clandestine manner. Normally statements of Nambardar and village Chowkidar are required to be recorded in such cases, but in this case the statement of the Chowkidar had not been recorded. So, I called the Chowkidar and recorded his statement which contradicted the findings of the field staff. Later on I came to know that the Chowkidar always stood with the truth declining the offer of any inducement and had, in the past, demolished the cases of many influential persons. It is very gratifying that, even today, some people despite being lowly placed stand by truth and justice. They are in fact an asset to the system and society. They only stand upright where, at times, even the responsible officials readily fall in the trap of inducements."

vii. "At another occasion I, as Tehsildar Samba, happened to be away from the Station for some social function, and a peon, namely, Shri Prem was available at my residence for the night. A procession of angry people against the Power Department came to the office cum residence complex of the Tehsildar. The Naib Tehsildar, who was putting up in the adjoining quarters, immediately took to heels in the darkness on the arrival of the procession, as he was afraid of facing the boisterous procession. The peon, however, maintained calm and handled the protesters tactfully. He pacified the crowd and rang the AEE of the Power Department to take steps to restore the power. The efforts of the peon satisfied the protesters and they dispersed peacefully. But for the tactful handling of the peon, the control less mob would have caused loss to Government property. The Naib Tehsildar became a laughing stock in the town as some of the protesters had seen him running away and they left no opportunity to make fun of him."

Going by these events, B. D. Sharma often expresses his firm belief that such instances do lead to prove that intelligence, tactfulness

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and common sense is not the reservoir of the officers only. We have a number of subordinates who are better equipped and better informed and are in a position to provide a lot of help in running the day to day affairs or to tackle a particular situation. An intelligent officer is one who has the acumen to identify such employees and make full use of them in solving a problem or in tackling a situation. In the same vein he further adds that majority of the Government employees adopt the often-beaten track in the performance of their duties. Generally, we neither go off the track nor think out of the box to solve a problem or to expedite a task. He did not hesitate in admitting that for quite a long period, he too remained the same sort of officer in the august company of such colleagues; and would often perform his duties in a slip shod manner without giving much of his mind. But on some occasions, when he happened to take some interest and showed a little keenness in tackling some problems, he had before him; he was able to resolve them smoothly. A little application of mind and due deliberations with the subordinates often yielded satisfactory results. Thus, he would cherish a lot of satisfaction whenever he happened to recollect these events in retrospect. But simultaneously, he would not hesitate in cursing himself as to why he didn't make it a way of his official routine in taking all his tasks seriously and attentively, right from the start of his career.

At the same time, B. D. Sharma is of the belief that it is not only the middle or the higher rung of the hierarchy who can introduce any innovation in getting some tasks completed expeditiously. Sometimes the lower level officials also put in practice some new ideas to bring some improvement in the way the tasks are being done. In this context he would, many a times, recollect some instances where he got an opportunity to do some pending tasks expeditiously and smoothly by giving a bit of his undivided attention or employing some new methods or by exploiting his personal goodwill and contacts with the public or his colleagues. These tasks can't be categorized as abnormal by any stretch of imagination and constituted the part and parcel of his normal duty. But he had the option to take them in a routine manner as he used to do earlier. Whenever he tried to concentrate his attention to these tasks then the efforts did bear fruit.

In this connection B. D. Sharma refers to an instance when he was posted as Deputy Commissioner Kathua. As a measure of reaching out to the people of the State, the Government of India provided a package to the newly formed Government headed by Mufti Mohammed Sayed, including the establishment of some new Kendriya Vidyalayas. Obviously the first choice for establishing such prestigious educational institutions

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would go to the militancy affected areas. But the functioning of these Schools had to be started within a short span of time as the new academic year was starting shortly. In the circumstances temporary accommodation for them had to be arranged immediately. Since no temporary accommodation could be arranged at the identified places, so as Deputy Commissioner, he received a telephone call from the Secretariat ascertaining whether it would be possible to arrange temporary accommodation for establishing two Schools within twenty or so days. It was already tenth of March so the time at his disposal was quite meagre. Since he didn't want the opportunity of having two Central Schools for the District slip out his hands, he immediately called a meeting of the concerned officers and after a detailed interaction decided that old Hospital building in the heart of Kathua town and the abandoned building of Ravi Tawi Irrigation Complex at Hiranagar could possibly be the two available options. Because of the scarcity of time he rushed out of the meeting himself for inspection of the identified buildings. At Kathua, the old Hospital building had been occupied by the CRPF and they had carried out some modifications in different rooms after their occupation, so they showed their reluctance in relocating themselves in the same building. But, the CRPF Commander had a lot of respect for the Deputy Commissioner, as often he had been helpful in resolving his skirmishes with the District Superintendent of Police. So, despite a lot of inconvenience to his boys and incurring some expenditure in rearranging things, the Commander agreed to vacate a portion of the building for the School. At Hiranagar the Irrigation Complex had long been abandoned, so it required lot of expensive and time-consuming repairs. Still the Executive Engineer PWD was made to show his willingness to complete the work expeditiously. Estimates for repair of the two buildings were got hurriedly prepared and the same was carried personally to the then Planning Commissioner, Shri Vijay Bakaya. Since it was already 20th of March, so initially he expressed his inability to provide the required funds, it being the fag end of the financial year. But being an officer with positive attitude, plus his soft corner for the Deputy Commissioner and in the face of latter's imploring, he acceded to get the demand accommodated in case any department had failed to utilize the allotted funds. Fortunately, the Education Department agreed to surrender Rs twenty-two lakhs and the same were immediately allotted to District Kathua for the purpose under discussion. With the allotment order in his pocket, Shri Sharma rushed to Kathua and asked PWD to take up works immediately. By the 10th of April the two Kendriya Vidyalas got started. The Deputy Commissioner had otherwise a lot of work to do at the close of the financial year still he snatched some time from his busy schedule because

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he felt that the task needed to be given priority, and without his personal involvement and efforts things would not have moved so quickly and smoothly. In retrospect, he does admit that the event gives him a lot of satisfaction that he could do something for the people of the District who used to shower a lot of love and respect on him. Thus, it goes without saying that it was very difficult to get even one Kendriya Vidyala sanctioned at that time and when the Administration had been given an opportunity to grab two of them, it would have not been proper to have the opportunity missed.

B. D. Sharma also happened to have a stint as Settlement Commissioner - a prestigious posting for a Revenue Officer. Here too, during the short stint, he tried to contribute a bit but very important aspect in bringing improvements in the working of the Settlement wing. An important event, as once shared by him, in his own words is reproduced hereunder:

"It was brought to my notice that the Record-of-Rights being prepared through computer were in curvy Nastalik format (resembling Arabic script). There was a strong feeling that it was a bit difficult to read the entries in the said format, particularly by those who were not proficient in Urdu. In order to bring a change, purchase of new software was necessary as it would, enable the Department to print the record in normal easy to read Persian script. But the dealing hand responsible for issuance of tenders was showing reluctance as Department had got embroiled in a controversy in some earlier purchase of computers, and the issue of purchase of new software or hardware was hanging fire for quite some time. I was, as such, unable to find a solution. One day I happened to visit the Election Office to pay my regards to Shri B. R. Sharma, the then Chief Electoral Officer, who in the past happened to be my boss as Divisional Commissioner Jammu. In his office some issue of printing of voter lists was being discussed. It was seen that the voter lists had been printed in beautiful normal Urdu format which could be read by anyone with rudimentary knowledge of the language. I requested the Chief Electoral Officer to provide the software to the Settlement Organization also. He initially showed his reservations, disclosing that the supplier would take them to court in case the software was used by any Department other than the Election. Then in a flash of thought he called for the copy of the agreement executed with the supplier from the dealing Assistant and went through it. Fortunately, while framing the agreement some sensible official had incorporated a provision in the agreement that the software could also be used by any other department of the State Government free of cost provided the concurrence of the supplier was

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obtained beforehand. We further discussed the issue in detail and as then resolved I made a written request to the Chief Electoral Officer in allowing the software, who in turn got concurrence of the supplier and we got the same without spending a penny. We had to make some technical adjustments in using it but it didn't pose much of difficulty as we had a very competent Naib Tehsildar having a lot of expertise in streamlining the working of the computers."

Some more observations from Shri Sharma, as disclosed by him on different occasions, are enumerated in his own words, in the following paragraphs: -

i. "Apart from the Revenue work, a Revenue Officer has to perform the duties of a Magistrate, but with the onset of militancy in our State the Police authorities obviously began to have an upper hand as the civil officers could hardly play any role in the militancy driven situations. But our new Special Commissioner for Rajouri and Poonch Districts often had novel ideas. In one of the monthly meetings, he insisted that a Revenue Officer should remain in close contact with the Public and try to gauge their mood and take appraisal of their grievances. According to him, the people had lot of respect for the helpful Revenue Officers and would readily come forward in sharing information which could be of immense value to the Government in taking remedial measures in the prevalent situation. With this advice in mind, I, as Assistant Commissioner Poonch used to broach the subject of growing militancy in Kashmir and how could our Dstrict Poonch be saved from this menace, with any responsible person who happened to visit our office. To my surprise, the people by and large would denounce militancy and even would show their willingness in fighting such elements. Militancy had not raised its ugly head in Poonch as yet, but it was rumoured that some boys had disappeared and had gone to Pakistan for getting training. One morning a respectable person came and informed me that some boys had come back from Pakistan after getting training and they were in the process of planning to strike somewhere in the days to come. I rang up the Tehsildar, who showed a lot of promptness and efficiency in getting the facts verified. He not only confirmed the information but also provided the particulars of some six or seven boys in question. I immediately talked to Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria, the then Special Commissioner about the developments and provided him the details of the Pak trained returnees. He immediately alerted all the concerned agencies and prompt action was taken by them in nabbing the boys and thus the occurrence of any violent act could be avoided. After a day or two when I happened to call on the Senior Superintendent of Police, he wondered about the

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resourcefulness of the Special Commissioner in getting the vital information so quickly. He virtually scolded his juniors as to how the Special Commissioner came to know about the arrival of the trainees even before the District Police head, although all intelligence gathering resources in the district were working under him (the SSP); he felt to have been let down before the Special Commissioner. On the other hand, Dr. Bloeria was highly appreciative of my resourcefulness and my standing in his mind got enhanced which stood me in good stead in my later years of service as he always spoke high of me in the higher echelons of administration."

ii. "In all the instances discussed in earlier paragraphs I didn't do something extraordinary because every Government employee is required to devise a way to tackle a problem to which he is confronted with. I simply designed a modus operandi and chartered a way with the guidance of my seniors and cooperation of colleagues and subordinates. The efforts were neither much off the track. But a sincere effort was all the same made to resolve a problem at hand. It may be mentioned with all the humility at my command that resolving these issues can't be categorized as extraordinary as they were part of my job. The issues might have lingered on for some more time but ultimately, they would have been resolved. For instance, my keen involvement might have helped to set up two Kendriya Vidyalas in Kathua District but there having not been established would have also not put Kathua lagging behind very much in the education sector. But at the same time, it cannot also be denied that better education facilities at nominal fee to the public particularly the wards of Central Government employees were provided through Kendriya Vidyalas, which did make a lot of difference to many children. Though my role in solving the problems was not more than ten to fifteen percent, yet it gave me a lot of satisfaction because I played the key role in giving shape to the solutions. It may further be added that the benevolence of the senior officers was significant in getting the things done expeditiously. Guidance by the Minister helped in evolving mode of disposal of gunny bags in one case, release of funds by Bakaya sahib for repair of old buildings for the schools, grant of permission by Shri B. R. Sharma in incorporating the new software in our computers and the prompting and the encouragement by Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria to be friendly with the publi1c and extracting some information from them were all of vital importance in the successful performance of my duty. So, the golden principle that the higher officers need to be kept in the highest esteem should always be kept in mind. In return they will shower their best wishes and favours upon their subordinates."

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iii. "I may also add that your ingenuity or 'Hikmat-Amali' many a times will help you to wriggle out of very critical situations. The Government employees should be well conversant with the likes and dislikes, the beliefs and the frame of mind of the people with whom they have to deal with. I used to have a very negative view of the clergy or the so-called 'God Man' as they were thought to be parasites on the society by me. I would consider them as the stumbling blocks to the progressive ideas. When I got posted as Assistant Commissioner Nyoma in Ladakh, I gathered the impression that the Lamas like their brethren in other religions were exploiting the common masses. Once I happened to pour out these feelings before my Deputy Commissioner (Leh), Shri S. S. Kapur also. But he admonished me a bit and asked me not to reflect such thoughts publicly as the same might land me in trouble because the Lamas commanded a lot of respect amongst the public and were in a position to cause me any harm. He further advised that a good administrator, on the other hand would keep them in good humour and utilise their services in getting some problems of the Administration solved. As it would happen, after some time, a dispute over the grazing rights in my Sub-division erupted between the locals and the Tibetan Refugees and it started assuming the proportions of a serious law and order problem. We called a meeting of the Gobas (Lambardars) and the other respectable persons of both the communities but nothing worthwhile could be achieved. Then I recollected the advice of my Deputy Commissioner and took the help of Lamas of both the communities. They leveraged the huge influence they wielded over their followers and a solution to the problem was easily found out."

iv. "Similarly, at another occasion I shrewdly made use of the predilection and inclination to religious beliefs of one of the key players in diffusing a law and order situation which could have assumed alarming proportions. Ch. Lal Singh was the Congress Party candidate against Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta in the Lok Sabha elections of 2004. After the counting had been completed, it was found that Ch. Lal Singh had won the election, but it took some time in consolidating the final figures, which in turn lead to some delay in handing over the Election Certificate to him. So, he left the Counting Hall to address the public and to express thanks to his supporters who had gathered in large numbers at a nearby location. During the counting a lot of hot words had been exchanged between the two candidates and their followers. Reports had started pouring in that violent clashes might take place when the followers of Congress candidate would take out the victory procession. It was already the evening time, and after the sunset the situation would have been

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conducive for the rioters. The early dispersal of the crowd was therefore required, but it was very difficult as the thanks giving rally had hardly started. Telephone call after telephone call started coming from the higher authorities for getting the crowd dispersed early. I as Returning Officer as well as District Magistrate was fully responsible for handling the situation. I was in a fix and unable to find a way out. The public meeting was likely to last one hour more but by then the darkness would have descended and a free for all situations might have developed. In this precarious situation a celestial guidance showed me the path. I contacted the duty Magistrate at the rally site and asked him to make me to talk to either Ch. Lal Singh or his wife who was also in public life. Since Lal Singh had just started addressing the crowd, his wife was on the line. I told her that the election certificate must be received during the day light only in order to ensure a bright political career for Chaudhary Sahib. I further told her that Hindu Shastras enjoined upon us to perform all auspicious tasks during the day light only. I was well aware of the fact that both the husband and the wife were very religious, so the advice coming from a learned Brahmin (myself, though totally blank in religious knowledge) could hardly be ignored. Consequently, Lal Singh immediately finished the public meeting, asked his followers to disperse and rushed to the Counting Hall to receive the election certificate. He virtually snatched the certificate from my hands saying it was to be got well before the sunset. I was a bit amused also in devising such an ingenious solution to an intractable problem. The advice from senior officers to pay due respect to the sentiments of the people, particularly the religious sentiments and to make use of them in getting our day to day administrative problems solved proved very beneficial to me."

In the end, B.D. Sharma recalls an event pertaining to the mid-eighties of last century when he was posted as Tehsildar Samba, in the early part of his service. Although the incident has no direct bearing on the working of the Revenue Department, yet the same gives an insight of the working of various departments in a coordinated way, and the manner in which certain important issues of public concern are sorted out. The incident concerns to some portion of the land upon which presently the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Jammu is being established. The land under reference had, over the years, been reclaimed from the Devak Nallah when a 'Bund' and a Bridge were constructed as part of laying of the Jammu- Pathankot National Highway immediately after Independence. 'Kai and Khad-Kana' (long dry wild grass) along with other shrubs had grown over the reclaimed land to give it such a look as would enamour the legendary Dev Anand to picturise some of the sequences on the wandering Swami with the ever-green S.D.

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Burman number 'Wahan Kaun Hai Tera Musafir' of his famous movie, 'Guide' in the background.

That piece of State land earlier belonged to the Revenue Department, but had later on been handed over to the Forest Department who had grown a number of Shisham and other trees on it over the years. Gradually herbs and sheaths of grass had also grown on it and thus a layer of soil had been formed there. Though the land was somewhat vulnerable to the floods from Devak Nallah yet it enjoyed a locational advantage being situated near the National Highway.

Some displaced persons (D.P.s) of 1971 Indo-Pak war from Chhamb who hadn't as yet got agricultural land allotted in their favour for their rehabilitation, despite lapse of some ten years, approached the Divisional Commissioner Jammu to get this land allotted to them. In order to study the suitability of the land and sorting out the matter with the Forest Department, the Divisional Commissioner undertook a visit for spot inspection along with a retinue of senior officers of Revenue and Rehabilitation, Forest and other allied departments. B. D. Sharma along with the other concerned Tehsil level officers was obviously in attendance during the tour of these senior officers. In the course of discussions on spot, the Divisional Commissioner inquired of the willingness of the Forest Department to spare the land in question. Sheikh Ghulam Rasool was holding the post of Divisional Commissioner Jammu then, and as he commanded a lot of respect and authority so no officer of any department would dare to put spokes in his wheel. As such the senior Forest Officers accompanying him readily agreed to hand the land back to Revenue Department for allotment to the displaced persons. However, in the meantime the local Range Officer sprung out suddenly and started arguing forcefully with the Divisional Commissioner that the land in question has a large number of trees which have been nurtured like children by him and his staff and these trees would meet their untimely end if the land is allotted for agricultural purposes. Everybody was stunned over the strange behaviour of the Range Officer because in the official decorum a subordinate officer is not supposed to give his opinion unless and until the same is sought. His somewhat boisterous arguments with the Divisional Commissioner in the presence and over the head of his superiors was, as such, an act of impropriety. Otherwise also one had to muster a lot of courage to argue with the all-powerful Divisional Commissioner. But all these niceties appeared alien to Som Nath, the Range Officer in question. Since Samba was still part of Jammu District and the Tehsildar being the senior most Tehsil level officer, was responsible for getting the tour of the Divisional Commissioner

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conducted smoothly, so he felt embarrassed over the behaviour of the Range Officer and tried to pacify him. However, before he could do so, the Conservator of Forests and Divisional Forest Officer had stepped in to make their subordinate officer understand that he should refrain from making objections to the proposal as the Government required the land for an urgent purpose, but the irrepressible Range Officer was not made of the material as would yield so easily to the commands of his superiors and stood his ground firmly.

The Divisional Commissioner deliberated over the matter dispassionately and found logic in the arguments of the Range Officer. Apart from the involvement of a large number of trees, the flood protection works would have also been adversely affected if the land had been put to agricultural use. The Divisional Commissioner accordingly decided to drop the proposal and directed the Tehsildar to look for some other land for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons. It may not be out of place to mention that at that time so much concern was not being shown over the environmental issues and neither had the Supreme Court set its watchful eyes on the preservation of trees/ forests so the vigilance and sensitivity of the employees only helped in their protection and preservation; as in this case.

After some years, however the scenario had changed, the commitment of a Range Officer like Som Nath was lacking in the Government machinery, which resulted in giving an opportunity to some people to manage un-authorised possession of this piece of land. Some of the trees so fondly nurtured by some conscientious employees of the Forest Department also started to disappear gradually from there. Some time back the Government decided to set up the prestigious Medical Institute at Vijaypur and this piece of land is part of the proposed site. It took a lot of effort and time by the authorities to take back the land from the persons who were in its illegal possession. It is understood that a seasoned officer Arun Kumar Manhas the then Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu was specifically assigned the task to retrieve the possession, which he ultimately accomplished, though with considerable difficulty and lot of efforts.

The story dealing with the short journey of this piece of land and trees planted on it gives a lot of fodder to the thinking people that sometimes, even the lowly placed officials do play a vital role in taking just decisions, which are in the best interests of the society, even under trying circumstances. But the time has drastically changed and a sense of lethargy has either crept in the official machinery or it has been incapacitated to act. This has led to the irreparable damage to our

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creditability in the eyes of general public; particularly that of the Revenue Department.

Concluding the narrative, it may be added that Shri B.D. Sharma not only earned name as a competent Revenue Officer, he was adequately rewarded by his induction into the I. A. S. with 1995 as the allotment year. Besides holding various Secretariat assignments till his promotion to the Super Time Scale of I. A. S., he also happened to serve as Labour Commissioner, Director Food and Supplies Department and Settlement Commissioner, and finally retired from Government service on 31st October 2012 from the post of Commissioner cum Secretary to Government Public Health Engineering, Irrigation and Flood Control Department. He is enjoying a satisfied retired life by staying put at his house in Channi Himmat Housing Colony, Jammu.



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S. DALIP SINGH

S. Dalip Singh was part of thousands of such other unfortunate families, who had to migrate from their native places (although those areas were very much part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir), in the wake of 1947 disturbances. He belonged to Mirpur (now POK) - a famous town of the area - known for many reasons including that the town suffered all types of colossal losses at the hands of PAK intruders. Eventually the civil population had to flee to safer locations, and with the 'Cease Fire' coming into operation, the town became part of POK. His father S. Teja Singh was a reputed businessman of the town with roaring business dealing in cloth including Government controlled cloth and allied items of common man use. His family had a palatial house in prestigious locality near 'Purana Qilla - opposite main drinking water well) of the town. Although, many a times S. Dalip Singh becomes sentimental and sad in recollecting unfortunate events, his family had to face at that particular point of time, including loss of some nears and dears, but the subject not being part of the book, the same is being passed over. In the flood of migration his family landed at Ambala Cantonment of the then State of Punjab, where they stayed for a decade or so, before returning to Jammu. Born on 26-02-1939 at Mirpur, Dalip Singh had his initial schooling at Cantonment Board Primary School, Ambala Cantonment and then did his Matriculation from Punjab National High School Ambala Cant. After the family came back to Jammu; he sought admission in Government Gandhi Memorial Science College Jammu and did his Graduation in the year1962.

In the year 1963, when 'The Jammu and Kashmir Co-operative Land Development Bank' came to be established in the State, S. Dalip Singh was lucky to be appointed as the first Branch Manager in charge Jammu Province. Since the institution was first of its kind in the State; Dalip Singh, under the patronage of Pt. Ram Nath Koul, the then Joint Registrar Banking and Finance, Jammu and Kashmir, had to put in extra efforts in working out the modalities and procedures of the newly established institution. He even visited the States of Punjab, Maharashtra

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and Gujarat in order to gain firsthand knowledge and replicate the same here. Later on, he was elevated to the position of Land Valuation Officer of the said Bank. A chance to work under the guidance of an experienced officer, and putting in extra efforts at the very initial stage of his service career; definitely had a long-lasting impact on the style of his future working, and he does not hesitate in acknowledging the fact even today.

Again, in the year 1967, when the State Public Service Commission initiated process for recruitment to the prestigious Kashmir Administrative Service (K.A.S.), S. Dalip Singh availed the opportunity by applying through proper channel being already in State service, for the same. This way, the year 1968 became a turning point in his life, when Dalip Singh, after passing through the rigorous of the State Public Service Commission, among others, was selected as a K. A. S. Officer and then deputed for two-year long training. It needs a mention here that since some of close relatives of Dalip Singh had been holding responsible positions in Revenue Department that definitely led him to inspire craze and style of Revenue Officers. Moreover, after his selection in to the K.A.S, S. Sohan Singh the then Secretary Revenue Department also became instrumental in further arousing his desire for joining Revenue Department. After successful completion of the two year training, he was posted as Head Quarter Assistant (Tehsildar) to the Deputy Commissioner Jammu. Thereafter, he got opportunities to work in the Revenue as also in other sister Departments in various capacities like, Tehsildar Ram Nagar, Sub-divisional Magistrate Tangdhar (Kashmir), Deputy Relief Commissioner, Chhamb Displaced Persons Rehabilitation Authority (CDPRA), Officer on Special Duty (O.S.D.) with Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda, General Manager JAKFED, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Additional Secretary to Government Finance Department, Member State Subordinate Services Recruitment Board, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Special Secretary to Government Planning and Development Department, Director Industries and Commerce Department, and finally the Member Jammu and Kashmir Special Tribunal - highest appellate forum against orders passed by competent authorities under various State enactments; wherefrom he retired on 28th of February 1997.

Even during initial period of his service career, Dalip Singh had developed a special as also deep respect and regards for S. Sohan Singh, - a veteran Revenue Officer of those times. According to him; S. Sohan Singh himself was a very efficient and illustrious Revenue Officer, who would often apprise him (S. Dalip Singh) with regard to difficulties as also ways and means to handle various kinds of situations those may arise in

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public dealings. His advice in handling with law and order situations as also maintenance of decorum of the assignment, "to be bold and fair" had been taken by Dalip Singh as the 'Gospel Truth', and the same had become a permanent feature of style of his official working. Besides, he has also been often expressing that he had received great love, affection and guidance from personalities like S/Shri Hamid Ullah Kahan, Sheikh Ghulam Rasool, and Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria - known stalwarts in the Revenue Department. According to S. Dalip Singh, valuable and sincere advices from such experienced personalities as mentioned here in before have definitely helped, to a great extent, in shaping his future service career.

S. Dalip Singh had been often sharing his experiences during the long tenure of his service career, out of which a few events are reproduced, to the possible extent as told by him, hereunder:

i. During the 1983 general elections to the Legislative Assembly of the State, a serious dispute arose in respect of Doda Constituency. The Election Commission of India, after assessing the ground position, took a very serious note of the situation, and issued orders for re-election in respect of several booths of the Constituency. Simultaneously the District Election Authority (Deputy Commissioner Doda) was divested of the election process. For the purpose of carrying forward further election process, a post of Additional Deputy Commissioner was created; S. Dalip Singh was picked up for the job, posted there and vested with the powers of the District Election Authority. He accomplished the entrusted assignment to the entire satisfaction of the public as also the higher authorities.

Here it merits a mention that prior to his posting as Additional Deputy Commissioner to Doda; Dalip Singh was holding equally important assignment as O.S.D. with Divisional Commissioner Jammu. Those days O.S.D. used to be the only 2 I/C to the Divisional Commissioner, and would be known as the 'Major Domo'. There was no post of Additional Commissioners, and only officers with high repute would be considered for the assignment of O.S.D. Of late, the post has been re-designated as Assistant Commissioner Central, and now there are two more posts of Additional Commissioners to assist the Divisional Commissioner besides the Assistant Commissioner Central. While holding the assignment of O.S.D., he was also appointed as Returning Officer for R. S. Pura Assembly Constituency of the Jammu District. At that point of time the author was posted as Tehsildar R.S.Pura, and of course, was also the Assistant Returning Officer for the said Constituency. It was a hot contest between the candidates of the Indian National Congress and the National

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Conference. The candidates of both the parties were very influential and resourceful personalities and there was a neck to neck fight. Despite these factors, the conduct of the election was accomplished without even a minor issue of concern. So far as the memory of the author goes, result of the election was declared by noon and probably we were the first to declare the result. This could be possible due to well thought, well planned and transparent style of work under the supervision and guidance of S. Dalip Singh.

ii. During his posting as the Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda, he had to his credit the resolving of a dispute about route of the 'Mela Pat' (a local famous festival) at Bhaderwah. Earlier, on the eve of Mela Pat the religious procession of one community used to pass through a Mosque, which this time, the other community objected to and resisted. The atmosphere in the town became highly surcharged and explosive. Dalip Singh, in his capacity as the Additional Deputy Commissioner cum District Magistrate intervened; took in to confidence the elders of both the communities and brought them to an amicable agreement. This way, by use of mere 'Hikmat-Amli' (practical wisdom) - a famous tool available with every experienced Revenue Officer, he succeeded in defusing a situation, which, if not handled tact fully and efficiently, would have flared up and turned in to a major communal tension.

iii. It was the year 1985, when S. Dalip Singh was posted as Deputy Commissioner of the border District of Rajouri, and Shri G. M. Shah was the Chief Minister of the State. Although it was a coalition Government of the Awami National Conference led by Shri G. M. Shah with Congress Party as its active partner, but on ground, on occasions, leaders of the two groups were not amiable to each other. There was a meeting of the District Development Board in which Ch. Talib Hussain, the then local Minister and Mirza Abdul Rashid the then M.L.A. Dharal (District Rajouri) as senior Members of the Board, were participating, among others. During the discussions, Ch. Talib Hussain, with a view to let down Mirza Abdul Rashid, proposed up gradation of Kakora School; although as per norms, Manjakote School, which formed part of Dharal constituency, deserved to be up graded. When the issue could not be resolved in the Board meeting amicably, Th. Devi Dass the then Deputy Chief Minister called both the leaders and the Deputy Commissioner to his office. The Deputy Commissioner when asked for his views, told that as per norms Manjakote would fall in the criteria for up gradation, but at the same time he suggested that since both the leaders are adamant, let both the Schools be up graded. The suggestion was well received by all concerned including the then Chief Minister as also the Deputy Chief Minister, except

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Ch. Talib Hussain. The then Chief Minister not only appreciated the suggestion of the Deputy Commissioner, but also expressed his pleasure in sharing that he had been receiving good feedback about the working of the Deputy Commissioner, especially in maintaining a balance between two parties (the coalition partners in Government). Accordingly, a decision for up gradation of both the Schools at Manjakote and Kakora was taken, which was well received by the public. But that did not go well with the Minister, who felt to have been humiliated, as Mirza Abdul Rashid succeeded in getting the School in his area of influence, up graded. On some other counts as well, Ch. Talib Hussain wanted to bend the Deputy Commissioner, who declined to compromise with dignity and honour of the position he was holding. Therefore, the Minister suggested, rather pressured, the Chief Minister to immediately shift the Deputy Commissioner on the pretext that he had been towing the line of leaders of other party. When the matter with regard to the shifting of Deputy Commissioner Rajouri came to the knowledge of the then Financial Commissioner, Sheikh Ghulam Rasool as also Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria; both of them pleaded with the Chief Minister for retention of the incumbent Deputy Commissioner on the plea that he had been performing well. The Chief Minister after hearing the two senior functionaries of his administrative set up, expressed his difficulty in displeasing his Minister on political considerations, but at the same time promised to set the things right in due course of time.

iv. In the year 1990, when Dalip Singh was posted as Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, and militancy was at its peak; several wings of R.S.S., Bajrang Dal and other associate groups led by Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi had started a march from Mumbai to reach Srinagar with a plan to hoist the National Flag at Lal Chowk there. A strong contingent comprising around ten thousand men equipped with lethal arms reached Jammu by Rail and there from reached Udhampur, where they stayed for the night. The Deputy Commissioner Udhampur had instructions, from higher administration, to stop the marchers at Udhampur with the involvement of local units of the groups connected with the march. Accordingly, the Deputy Commissioner took in to confidence all those who mattered in the town, applied the proverbial 'Hikmat-Amli' and after, hours long parleys succeeded in persuading them to prevail upon the marchers not to proceed towards Srinagar. As per plan, the next morning procession was stopped just after it reached few yards outside the city, without use of any force what so ever. Thereafter, they were comfortably made to stay at Degree College Udhampur with all necessary arrangements and provisions till they left back for Jammu. The handling of the event by the

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Deputy Commissioner, of course with the involvement of local functionaries of connected parties, in a very tact full manner and cordial atmosphere, averted any untoward incident, and was a great success for the entire administration. The 'Ram Janam Bhoomi' agitation was also handled in the similar way, and both the events earned the Deputy Commissioner great name and fame in the public as well as the higher administrative echelons.

When specifically asked to enlighten about his style of working, which helped him in handling difficult situations during the period of his postings as the Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda and then the Deputy Commissioner of two important Districts of Rajouri and Udhampur, Dalip Singh shared as under:

(a) In order to facilitate the public at large, Permanent Resident Certificates (P. R. Cs), Gun Licenses' and Atta Chakki Licenses etc. used to be issued or renewed, as the case may be, at Tehsil and Niabat headquarters, in open Darbar to be organised every fortnight on pre-notified dates.

(b) Subordinate Revenue Officers and other District level Officers were treated as co-workers with no impression of superiority. However, official decorum and dignity would be maintained, at all the occasions, treating it as the uppermost priority.

(c) He was always very helpful, accommodating and sympathetic to public in general and colleague employees working with him, in particular.

These tips could well serve as a guide lines for the Revenue Officers of present times.

Last but not the least, views of S. Dalip Singh with regard to working of the Revenue Department, in his own words, are as follows;

"The Revenue Department is the backbone of the administration and it serves as eyes of the Government. All events of land management in addition to other multifarious works, such as census, election, relief, law and order etc. are handled by the Department. However, in present times, the image of the staff especially the lower staff is not appreciable. In this regard the greatest cause is posting of the staff."

With a view to bring some improvement in the prevailing situation, he has following suggestions to make;

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(a) There should be a specific policy of making adjustments. An employee posted in urban area should not be transferred to another area where sale and purchase of land takes place on large scale. He should be posted in rural area desirably in another Tehsil.

(b) Transfer should be made by the officer who is competent to do so, and not by the higher authorities, which lead to favourtism for obvious reasons.

(c) The staff should be periodically motivated to exhibit better standard of work and conduct to maintain the dignity, as also to inculcate an attitude of being helpful to general public.

(d) As in the Engineering and other Departments, promotion in Revenue Department should be time bound, as there is large scale stagnation at lower level, which leads to heart burning and undesired practices.

A retired I.A.S. officer from the Jammu and Kashmir cadre reminiscences about S. Dalip Singh in the following words;

"It was in the early nineteen-seventies that I was attached with the Deputy Commissioner Udhampur for my District Training as an I.A.S. Probationer. A part of this mandated schedule included eight weeks experience in one of the Tehsils. Usually, people go through this exercise in the headquarter Tehsil only, as that takes care of lot of administrative details and also no dislocation is involved. To get a comprehensive feel of this work, I preferred to do this bit in one of the outside Tehsils of Udhampur and chose Ram Nagar for this purpose. S. Dalip Singh, then a young K.A.S. officer, was the Tehsildar there and I was pleasantly surprised to get a genuinely warm welcome on arrival. This was something contrary to the general feeling at that time that the I.A.S. Probationers were seen to be too 'nosey' and avoided by the State Officers. However, this person appeared to be different; he was in fact an extra ordinary professional who appeared to be in control of things around.

"When I landed in Ram Nagar, Dalip Singh had only few days ago moved into his recently constructed accommodation and therefore, the two-room set occupied by him till then - just above the Tehsil office - was lying vacant. Instead of lodging me in the P.W.D. Dak Bunglow, he insisted that I take possession of that set and also shift my family there. So, in fact I became a part of the small group of officers of the Tehsil just within a couple of days of my arrival. But, some apprehensions still remained; as

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back in the I.A.S. Academy in Mussorrie the general impression was that in all States the local officers try to avoid the Probationers to the extent possible.

"On my first day in the office; after finishing general briefing about the multifarious Tehsil work, Dalip Singh told me that for the next two months - as long as I was there - he would just stay at his residence close by and that I would henceforth function as de-facto Tehsildar of Ram Nagar. Saying this, he got up from his chair, made me to sit on it and went to his quarters. But, before leaving he did mention that in case of need he was only a call away and that every evening we would have a cup of tea together and discuss the day's proceedings. This way I was left holding the fort; and with the advantage of hindsight I do realize that there was no other way I could better learn the intricacies of the Revenue work and other miscellaneous matters as also odd jobs of this basic administrative unit. It was also here that I picked up and understood various facets of the Executive Magistrate's work; something very basic and hugely important part of our service. Also, a very noteworthy part of my stay in Ram Nagar was an eight-day tour of the interior hilly tracts of Dudu and Basantgarh, which were then a part of this Tehsil. I foot slogged the entire belt, in the company of the field staff-Girdawar and Patwaris-and staying in different villages at night.

"All in all, it was an unforgettable experience and the things I learnt there came handy in my subsequent professional career. I also struck a life-long friendship with Dalip Singh; which has only matured over the decades. I very sincerely feel that only a confident, contended and competent man like S. Dalip Singh would behave and teach so magnanimously."

The above narrative is more than sufficient to arrive at a conclusion that for these qualities of head and heart, several I.A.S. probationers notably Shri I. S. Malhi, who later retired as Chief Secretary of the State, Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria, who also retired as Chief Secretary of the State and some others, preferred to be with Dalip Singh for their Revenue training during their probation period, and that in fact, is a great compliment to S. Dalip Singh. For reasons detailed in the earlier part of this narrative, S. Dalip Singh earned a name, rather became a popular Revenue Officer, who was in great demand in public as well as the official circles. Besides having received due, sometimes even early, promotions in the Kashmir Administrative Service cadre, he was also inducted in to Indian Administrative Service in the year 1986 with year of allotment as

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1980, while as many of his colleagues could not dream of reaching that level in any respect.

In the year 2008 when the State of Jammu and Kashmir was under Governor's rule; due to some serious conflict of interests between two rival groups of the Sikh community, election to the District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, although overdue, were not found feasible. At that time, the Governor's administration constituted a Committee comprising eleven members with S. Dalip Singh as its President. This Committee remained in place for a period of about seven years till a new Committee was formally elected. The nominated Committee under the presidentship of S. Dalip Singh performed quite well and received appreciation from all corners.

In retrospective, all these factors are of great help to S. Dalip Singh in enjoying a peaceful and most satisfied retired life in his own house at Chhani Himat - a posh colony of Jammu city.



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DEWAN SINGH LANGEH

Born on 10-01-1936 in the family of Th. Anant Singh Langeh in village Malpur of erstwhile Tehsil and District Jammu, now Tehsil Bhalwal of District Jammu, Dewan Singh Langeh, commonly known by his short name 'Langeh Sahib', is also one of the retired Revenue Officers who have left quite favourable, fair and indelible mark in the history of the Revenue Department for the period ending mid-nineties of the past century. He often feels proud in sharing his past to the affect that although he belonged to a rural peasant family, yet he was blessed with parents immersed in honest thinking; ready to help needy, helpless, neglected and oppressed segments of the society. According to him that aspect chanced to grow up and shape his personality inculcated with virtues like truth, probity, self-respect, and readiness to help the neglected; in daily dealings as also to implement those ideals with courage. He vividly recounts his childhood spent in rural background when, 'Barter' system was prevalent as daily means of transactions, with the village shopkeeper, for minor kitchen and ancillary household needs; while Dhella, Paisa, Takka, Anna, Duani and Chuani as a part of the currency, as also Chhtank, Seer and Maund etc. were the weights in vogue those days. Both the denominations of currency and that of the weights are a thing of the past now; and the present generation won't even have an idea about those units, which remained in force throughout the country, in the past, for centuries. Further, he feels pleasure in telling about certain cultural values of those days, including that children were ordained never to raise voice against one's parents, Teachers and other family elders; the village elders, irrespective of cast, creed, faith or colour were addressed with respect as Tau, Tai, Chacha, Chachi, Mama and Massi etc. as the case may be; in private as well as in public. Similarly, as part of established rural culture, a wedding especially that of a girl from the village would be religiously monitored and supervised by elders in order to rule out any short coming in the whole affair. A voluntary pooling of required material, such as ration, charpais (local cots), beddings and a spacious house for night stay of 'Baratis' (marriage party) used to be routinely arranged. Besides, not only the Baratis would be well taken care of in every respect,

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but even it used to be ensured that pack animals like, horses, bulls and camels etc. brought by Baratis would be fed voluntarily by village community on shared basis.

Dewan Singh had his initial schooling in the Village School having a single Teacher. He then studied from 6th to 8th standard in Middle School Gharota (now a High School) located at a distance of more than six K.Ms. from his village. Almost half a day would be consumed in trudging miles in going to School and coming back to home, traversing rough and stone studded path all through irrespective of hot, cold or rainy weather. There were no desks to sit, rather squatting on self broomed mud floor; in hot and humid or cold (as the weather may be) class rooms would be a thing beyond imagination of the present generation. Once again, he takes one back in history by recalling those old days, in the narrative ahead. Especially his reference to wooden Takhtis, Slates, Slate pencils, wooden Kalam, (later Nib holders), black ink often indigenously prepared (from ash of almond shells mixed with Goond - a local tree fat) leads one to a pleasant flashback. Those days there used to be no lunch boxes, and in order to blunt the hunger it used to be a common practice to pelt stones on fruit trees such as Mangoes, Ber etc. or plucking tiny Black Ber (Garna) on way back, which would often attract thorny pricks and minor injuries. There were no play grounds for Foot Ball or Cricket like games. However, games like Volley Ball and Kabadi used to be played in School compound during recess period.

Then, there came the year 1947, a dark period of our history. The family of Langeh also had to suffer and face the harsh effects of the upheaval of the partition, well explained in his own words as follows;

"A night long raid by Pakistani raiders left three male members killed and three females taken to Pakistan. This occurrence affected my continuity to School for few months. My parents were economically shattered by plunder of the raiders. Apprehending repetition of misadventure by Pakistani raiders, even during normal days we used to spend our nights at some safe nearby village. Those compelled circumstances did cause disruption in my studies, and therefore, at one point of time I settled with the idea that ordeal of studies is over. This punctuated my academic year. After being reminded by the School authorities in the next year, my parents forced me to continue my studies against my reluctance with awesome thrashing. Examination of the Middle Standard was held by the Board in High School Akhnoor. Even at this stage, I wonder to find myself to be successful amongst a few students of the School. It still haunts me that one of my class mates - son

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of a Teacher fell through. The outcome of 8th standard encouraged my parents and therefore, they got me admitted in 9th class in Government High School Akhnoor - the nearest High School, involving a daily traverse on foot of a distance of six KMs in going to School and then same distance coming back to my village, irrespective of season and weather furies. For appearing in the final examination of Matriculation, there used to be held a 'Golden Test' and only those who were found through in at least one compulsory subject were allowed to sit in the examination, while the rest were detained for the year. The event of announcement of result of the 'Golden Test' still haunts me, as that had grilled me through inexplicable mental torture though momentarily. In the sequence of announcement of result, the 1st category was of the students, who had passed in all the five subjects, with other categories of those who had passed in four, three, two, and the last who had passed in one subject only. The rest, whose names did not figure any of the five lists, fell under the category of those who had failed in all the subjects; they were asked to stand up and see the Head Master in his office chamber. Since my name was not announced in any of the five categories, therefore, I also stood up and became a part of the queue to see the Head Master, as advised. The time between the announcement of the last name and standing in queue ebbed my all the living spirits and, therefore, in search of an earth cleavage to hide forever instead to face a phenomenon of failure in all the subjects. In the meanwhile, our Hindi Teacher, a God sent special force for the moment, noticed me standing in the queue. He caught hold of me by the arm, took me to the Teacher who announced the result, and asked him to re-examine the result sheet carefully in my respect to see if there had not been any mistake. The Teacher after going through the result sheet realised to have committed a blunder in not announcing my name, candidly apologised for the overlook, and declared my name to have passed in all the five subjects. That declaration spontaneously restored my mental state of mind as well as physical equanimity."

Here it has to be accepted that, sometimes, there do happen such incidents in one's life, which are beyond one's control. But at the same time, it is very difficult to forget such incidents, rather such happenings continue to haunt in future life. It also needs to be added here that strictly speaking, the events narrated in forgoing pages and some narrated hereafter, had no direct connection with the main theme of the book, but, of course, are not totally aimless. It must be admitted that struggle as also sufferings in one's life, especially those faced during early periods of life do leave deep imprints on a person's bent of mind' particularly the

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attitude towards redressing sufferings of others, and that is true in the case of Dewan Singh as well.

Passing of Matriculation examination and that too by scoring good marks by standards of those times, on the one hand bought a sense of joy among the elders of the family, and on the other hand filled the mind of Dewan Singh with an urge for joining College; as he had heard the famous phrase, "No knowledge without College" permeating the friends circles. Fortunately for him, his brother-in -law then a serving Army personnel had come on leave, who actively joined the result hustling and at the same time suggested shifting of Dewan Singh to Kalu Chak - his home village, as according to him it would be easier to attend College from there as compared to Dewan Singh's own village Mal Pur. He not only assured of financial help, rather actually acted as well on regular basis, but also arranged a Bicycle that helped Dewan Singh in peddling to Government Gandhi Memorial Science College Jammu and back. This way he did his Graduation in the year 1958.

Next one year was spent in quest for a desired appointment in a Government Department, which ultimately ended in having been selected as a Naib Tehsildar candidate, as a part of a long list of around one hundred such candidates. After successful completion of a long and multiple training, including in Settlement, Revenue and Rural Development work, spread over a period of more than two years, Dewan Singh was appointed as Naib Tehsildar in Consolidation of Holdings wing of the Revenue Department (then designated as Assistant Consolidation Officer) in the year 1962. For a number of reasons including the war of 1962, the revolutionary scheme of Consolidation of Holdings came to be wound up suddenly, and the staff which thus became surplus was adjusted elsewhere. This way Dewan Singh landed in the State Excise and Taxation Department, and posted as Inspector at Srinagar. After a brief service in the Excise and Taxation Department, he was repatriated to Revenue Department and posted as Naib Tehsildar Doda in the year 1964. There he had a chance to work under the able guidance of Sayed Amin Shah the then Tehsildar Doda and Shri K.D. Sharma the then Deputy Commissioner Doda (the combined District comprising of present three Districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban). Dewan Singh vividly recalls his experience of learning with these two officers, and according to him; "both these officers with loud thinking, vast experience in Revenue and administrative matters were the guiding factors in Revenue hierarchy. I learnt a lot from both of them, which in turn, embraced me with promotion, and posting as Tehsildar Haveli (Poonch) in the year 1970".

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During his posting as Tehsildar Haveli (Poonch), a memorable incident needs a mention as follows.

A cloud burst took place in village Sheindhara of the Thesil, which caused heavy losses including landslides and erosion of cultivable lands. The then Relief and Rehabilitation Minister paid a visit to the affected areas and announced per kanal cash relief. The cash relief allurement shook conscience of many private as also the public persons. As a consequence, thereof, one ex- M.L.A. (name withheld) approached the then Deputy Commissioner Poonch to ensure that he too gets the relief. As mandated, Dewan Singh inspected the site and found that land of the ex- M.L.A. had been part of a rivulet since a long time ago, and had not been affected by the current natural calamity. As such, he was found not to be covered under the guidelines for the current relief package and therefore, not entitled to any relief announced by the Government. Ex-M.L.A. was explained the position and a report submitted to the authorities accordingly. The Deputy Commissioner as well as the Ex-M.L.A. were not happy, and tried to use every trick of the trade to pressurise Dewan Singh for recommending inclusion of name of the ex-M.L.A., but nothing moved him to go against factual position and above all against his conscience. The Deputy Commissioner felt annoyed, and tried his best to get Dewan Singh transferred out of his District, but such attempts found resistance from none other than the sitting M.L.A.

In the year 1971, Dewan Singh was posted as Tehsildar Mendhar - a war time period. It was almost a daily routine for them (the Tehsildar and his staff), even at the risk of their lives, to reach out to the border residents in order to resolve their day today problems, especially certain urgent issues with the local Army units. Local administration did realise the commendable job done in that difficult situation, and in recognition thereof, Shri G.N. Naik, the then Deputy Commissioner Poonch, recommended for grant of four advance increments in favour of Dewan Singh Langeh and another official for exceptional service rendered by them during the war period. For reasons best known to the authorities of the time, the recommendation did not see the light of the day. During his next tenure of posting as Tehsildar Hiranagar as well, he earned a good reputation of being an excellent Revenue Officer, and the then Deputy Commissioner Kathua recommended his name for award of 'Gold Medal' in recognition of his commendable service; and this time again the recommendation met the same fate. But that did not dampen his spirit of devotion to duty and service to the humanity (people at large).

Thereafter, Dewan Singh got another prestigious posting as

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Tehsildar Ranbir Singh Pura (R. S. Pura), wherefrom in the year 1977 he was elevated and posted as Sub-divisional Magistrate Kishtwar (Now a District). For all times, the Sub-division of Kishtwar had been termed as a difficult station administratively, but he performed well and to the best satisfaction of his superiors. During that period elections to the Legislative Assembly were conducted and Dewan Singh was saddled with the responsibility of 'Returning Officer' for two Assembly Constituencies namely, Kishtwar and Inderwal. The election process was also accomplished peacefully with the returning of both National Conference candidates namely, B.A. Kichloo and G.M. Bhaderwahi.

While discussing important events of his life, Dewan Singh narrated few incidents that pertained to the period when he was posted as Sub-divisional Magistrate Kishtwar. It would be appropriate to relate those events, in his own words, as under;

i. "A severe cloud burst occurred that washed away almost half of a village (hamlet) near "Chandi Mandir" in Paddar area. Heavy snow fall, which followed, blocked all the land routes to the area making it difficult to reach the affected village. The situation became so grave that in order to reach out the affected population, Chopper service had to be pressed into, and as an immediate step essential food articles were dropped through Chopper of which, I led the first sortie. Higher authorities were kept informed of the ground position, on day to day basis. Taking note of the gravity of the situation, the Government constituted a Committee of officers headed by the Sub-divisional Magistrate to suggest and recommend comprehensive rehabilitation measures for re-settlement of the affected families. It gave me satisfaction to, later on, learn that Committee's recommendations were accepted and implemented in toto, as a part of which the affected families were re-settled on a piece of State land at Gulab Garh (Atholi), now a Tehsil headquarter."

ii. "In this incident one Hindu girl had eloped with a boy of other community. Reportedly she got converted in presence of a Mufti of Anantnag Mosque to Islam faith. There was much hush hush in the town (Kishtwar) and the situation was being watched and monitored carefully. However, one evening the girl appeared before the local Tehsildar, presented to him the 'Fatwa' of having been converted to Islam, and requested for providing protection from her erstwhile community members. The Tehsildar hesitated in taking any action, and advised the girl to approach the

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Sub-divisional Magistrate - a senior officer available at the station. Consequently, the girl and her associates moved out to reach the Sub-divisional Magistrate. But while on her way to Sub-divisional Magistrate, a group of villagers caught hold of the girl and forcibly whisked her away to some unknown place. Later, it was also reported that during the scuffle to get hold of the girl, the assailants also mutilated and then tore out the 'Fatwa'. This infuriated the youngsters belonging to Muslim community and situation in the town, all of a sudden, became very tense. As an immediate step, a case was got registered with the Police Station and search of the miscreants (assailants) started. The next day witnessed frequent incidents of stone pelting and sloganeering. Sensing that the situation may take a bad turn, therefore, in order to defuse the same, a meeting of elders of the majority community, including father of the local Minister Shri B.A. Kichloo and Imam of the Town Mosque, was hurriedly convened in the evening. The participants while expressing concern for the sad incident, unanimously resolved to work for bringing back peace in the town, but at the same time were apprehensive of chain reaction in case the situation was not tackled immediately. In the meanwhile, the next morning news came that the girl had reneged and married another youth of her earlier faith.

"Few days later, the Deputy Commissioner and the Minister for Revenue and Rehabilitation visited Kishtwar. They conveyed their unhappiness about my dealing with the situation in the case discussed above. But to their surprise, members of both the communities lavishly praised my handling the sensitive situation by insulating the surcharged atmosphere through synergy, inclusivity, nipping the evil in bud and in harmonising the communal harmony".

"Today at this advanced stage of my life, whenever I have a flashback of the event, I do thank my stars for providing me chance of working under the guidance of various experienced officers, which gave me strength to handle such situations gracefully. At the same time, I also intend to express my gratefulness towards elders of majority community of Kishtwar Town, especially the father of local Minister Shri B. A. Kichloo and Imam of the Town Mosque for their collective and responsive

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sagacity in deferring the otherwise communal turmoil in the town."

The eventful tenure at Kishtwar was followed by a home city posting as Collector Land Acquisition Northern Railways - Jammu Udhampur Rail track. This assignment was exclusively meant for expediting the acquisition of land required for the proposed track, but the Government in its wisdom tasked him for urgent matrix enquiries, a couple of them may be relevant to un-peddling the unwanted situations. In the State Legislative Assembly Elections, Langeh was appointed as Returning Officer for Samba Constituency. There was a tough contest between the candidates of National Conference and Congress. After tactfully tackling various stages of receiving nominations, scrutiny of nomination papers, appointment polling staff etc. the D day came when counting of votes was to be undertaken. Here again Dewan Singh had a quite harrowing experience, hence being related in his own words as under;

"For certain reasons not required to be elaborated at this stage, the process of counting of 'Ballot Papers' got prolonged, and had to be continued though out the night. We had maintained a contact with people of various walks of life; as per reliable source information, there was a hot rumour that National Conference candidate, sensing a defeat, might conspire to rob counted as well as uncounted ballot papers and destroy the same with the purpose of creating circumstances leading to compelling Election Commission to order re-election. Viewing emerging tension, explosive situation, defeatist and negative attitude of various elements, I asked the Tehsildar Samba, who happened to be the Assistant Returning Officer of the Constituency as well, to exert his good will, expertise and even extrication to ensure that counting of ballot papers would be accomplished smoothly. He tried but did not succeed, as he was found strategically wanting. Therefore, he offered ingenious suggestion to resort to fire if need be, which I did not approve of, unless there would have been a grave situation. Anyhow, I caught hold of the National Conference candidate, counselled him dispassionately or else to be ready to face the beginning of the end of his political career. This dimmed the flash point. Meanwhile, one Election Observer - a District and Sessions Judge, on the issue of some disputed marking, asked to stop counting and making a reference to the Election Commission. I politely advised to restrict him to observation only and not to interfere with the ongoing process of counting of ballot papers. Good sense prevailed on all; counting was resumed and carried out without any misadventure as apprehended. Ultimately, the result was declared, as Congress candidate

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to have been elected to the Legislative Assembly. The National Conference candidate, who lost the election, won in the next election and was graced with Cabinet chair twice."

The episode leads one to a belief that tactful handling of a situation with a firm and unbiased mind is the buzz word in public dealings.

In a subsequent assignment, Dewan Singh was appointed, a 'One Man Enquiry Commission', in a Jammu Central Jail Break case to pin point the responsibility and to suggest remedial measures within a fixed time frame. While the Assembly session was on, once during the question hour, one senior Minister from Jammu Province questioned the status and seniority of Dewan Singh in probing and dealing with such sensitive matters. It is in the Hon'ble House record that the in reply to the question, the Home Minister expressed Government's full faith in Commission's independence, unbiased, impeachable honesty, integrity and immune to influence thinking as well as official dealings. Enquiry as asked for was completed by him well within the stipulated time frame. In concluding the event, Dewan Singh expressed a sense of satisfaction to have, later on, learnt that recommendations of the 'One Man Commission', which included awarding punishments to the delinquents, improving the Jail infrastructure, sensitising overall internal Jail security etc. were implemented in toto by the Government.

In the later part of eighties of the past century, Dewan Singh got the assignment of Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu. The job assignment included, to perform as Additional District Magistrate, Collector under the Land Revenue Act, 1996 (samvat) as also to redress public grievances etc. under the overall supervision and directions of the Deputy Commissioner. Here too he performed well and with dignity. He seemed to be keen to share that at occasions one has to take tough stand, even to the annoyance of his superiors, in order to convey his point of view and not to act upon illogical orders or instructions. But, according to Dewan Singh, only few Revenue Officers, especially those having fine track record could venture such courage of action. He further added that under one of the circular instructions issued by the then Divisional Commissioner, it was required that every 'Fard Intkhab' (abstract revenue record for purpose of affecting sale/purchase), issued by a Patwari, would be countersigned by the Additional Deputy Commissioner of the area. It may be appropriate to add for the information of common readers that in Jammu and Srinagar Districts there are two posts of Additional Deputy

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Commissioners, and at that particular point of time his other counterpart was Rajinder Singh Parihar - another Revenue Officer of very high repute. Both of them had an internal meeting, discussed the problem and decided to represent to the Divisional Commissioner expressing their inability to comply with the instruction on ethical and administrative reasons. According to Dewan Singh they took up the matter with the Divisional Commissioner, but the later was reluctant to withdraw the instruction. Therefore, after raising the level, the matter reached the Revenue Minister. Further course of events would be appropriately related in the words of Dewan Singh as under;

"We explained the reasons for reluctance on our part that a Tehsildar has the pivotal and responsible role as custodian of the record, to be played in the working of the Revenue Department. While as the Additional Deputy Commissioner has got a supervisory role to be played at District level. Besides, it was argued that if Additional Deputy Commissioners would start calling Patwaris to District head quarter for verification of records before countersignature, that would badly reflect on the day today working at Tehsil level. The arguments were well taken and instructions were withdrawn. But this much needed resistance impacted my Annual Confidential Role (ACR) for the year. Outstanding performance recorded by initiating officer was adjudged to be overrated by the Divisional Commissioner, and the same was downgraded from 'Outstanding' to 'Good'. This under rating of Annual Confidential Rolls was never intimated to me and, as such, remained unchallenged, although at variance with principles of natural justice and probity in official functioning. As the ill luck would have been, my wife fell seriously ill just there after (i.e. just after my posting as Director Land Records and Consolidation of Holdings Jammu). She had to be shifted to Delhi and operated upon and I had to be with her for a quite long time. During that very period, a meeting of Selection Committee comprising the Central and State Officers was held to assess and recommend names of State officers for their induction to Indian Administrative Service. It was learnt that my name was part of the list of officers in the 'Consideration Zone' for that very year as well as in an earlier similar exercise, rather in the earlier exercise my name figured at a higher place on the basis of excellent performance recorded in the ACRs, and that some Committee members had taken note of sudden degradation in rating of the performance in the ACR. Much about what happened thereafter is not known. However, not commenting on how the process of selection was circumvented, it was a

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fact that officers who had faced suspension on the charge of misuse of their official position were part of the list of officers inducted into I.A.S, and that remained a puzzle for me. In any case that sealed the prospect of my induction into I.A.S."

It merits a mention here that such incidents in one's life do have a demoralising effect on his mind, and Dewan Singh was no exception. But the later events, like his postings on various prestigious assignments, healing touch of the time, besides the family support did erase the sad feelings, and he continued to serve as a sincere and conscious worker. After having been posted as Director Local Bodies for a period of about one year, Dewan Singh was once again posted as Director Land Records and Consolidation of Holdings at the fag end of his service, and he retired on superannuation from there on 31st of January 1994, as a satisfied person.

Just close to end of our last session in connection with the narrative in this part, Dewan Singh wanted to convey his gratitude towards his family members and all those who have been of any help to him during the long journey of life, in the following words;

"Despite all evens and odds in service career, I feel rejuvenated and elated when the persons I had the occasions to deal with during service tenure meet me with smiling expressions and warm respect. This unspent and unending treasure, as also voluntary love and respect from the public is my health tonic, and keeping me happy and agile till date. I am also thankful of my elders in the Biradri in employing sincere efforts in securing me the desired stream of service. I am inexplicably indebted to my parents, Brother-in-law and 'Guruji' to have encouraged, sustained, guided, honed and oriented my period of childhood and studies against all financial and circumstantial constraints. A sense of love and affection for my son Brigadier Sanqeer Langeh and his spouse Dr. Bandhana Langeh in their sincere efforts for timely treatment and overcoming the dreaded illness I suffered.

"Lastly, I owe words of gratitude to my soul mate Smt. Padmni Langeh, in rock standing in my selfless and disciplined service to the people, grooming and shaping careers of the children, enriching my life struggle with her lion heart, and her monumental role to be with all thick and thin.

"I wish well and good health to everybody."

After retirement, Dewan Singh took up the profession of practice

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in Revenue cases and was enjoying this change, when in the year 1997; he was once again picked up by the Government to be appointed as Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board till it was re-constituted. Thereafter he got attracted towards social and political activities. In politics, he practically started from booth level and reached up to the level of Organising Secretary at State level in Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee. Though anxious to serve more, yet ill health forced him to say good bye to the active political and social activities, of course, with heavy heart. In this context he once quoted the famous couplet as follows;

"Bade Shouq Se Sun Raha tha Zamana
Hum Hee So Gaye Dastan Kehte Kehte"

In concluding the narrative, it may be added that for major period of his service career, Shri Dewan Singh remained part of the Revenue Departmentat and by dint of his hard work and devotion to duty added with sympathetic attitude towards rural mases, in particular, he not only earned name and fame among people but also had created a quite favourable place in the minds of those holding higher administrative positions in the State. At present he is enjoying his old age in a newly constructed house raised by his Brigadier son at Chhani Himat, in the affectionate care of his son and daughter-in-law - a rare gift of God in these difficult times.



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DWARIKA NATH TRISAL

Generally, he is known by his short name, D. N. Trisal. Although he belongs to District Pulwama of the Valley, but he has served in Jammu Division as well in various capacities such as, Tehsildar Rajouri, Assistant Commissioner (General) Jammu and Additional Deputy Commissioner Ramban. We came into contact for the first time when he was posted as Assistant Commissioner (General) Jammu, but we had just customary relations. In September 1984, on my promotion, I was posted as Assistant Commissioner (General) Anantnag and that for me became the time to know about the real nature and human values Trisal possessed. On my joining at Anantnag, I found that Trisal was also posted there as Assistant Commissioner (Revenue). That was my first posting in Valley; did not know Kashmiri language and was not accustomed to Valley's weather, but Trisal saw to it that my stay there was quite comfortable in every respect. Above all his family members were also very accommodating. The residential quarter where I was supposed to stay, a newly constructed building located just adjacent to that under occupation of Trisal, still needed certain interior work to be undertaken. Trisal and his wife did not allow me to take meals anywhere else but compulsorily made me to dine with them till the building became fully functional and I had all needed arrangements in place, which period, to the best of my memory, was not less than a month.

The event reminds one of the traditions and values of Revenue Department in the times of yore.

Trisal originally belongs to village Trichal of Tehsil and District Pulwama (Kashmir); although at a much later stage he did construct a house in Srinagar city. Born on 19th April 1936 in the family of Smt. Dhanwati mother and Shri Resha Ram Trisal father, he was brought up in a rural back ground. In those old days' village Trichal was not having even a Primary School, so he received his primary education from nearby Government Primary School located at village Thab. Later he joined Mehjoor Memorial High School Pulwama where from he passed his Matriculation in the year 1953, and finally Graduated from Amar Singh

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College Srinagar in the year 1957 with subjects including Mathematics and Economics. However, as a part of his cherished desire, he acquired a Law degree from Nagpur (Maharashtra) University at a later stage of his life.

Shri Resha Ram, father of Shri Trisal was working in Revenue Department as Patwari, who later on got promoted and retired as Girdawer. As a part of his professional activities, he would be mostly dealing with maintenance of land records, measurements of land and allied jobs, necessarily connected with rural population, who mainly depended on agriculture as their main source of lively hood. His day to day specialised working in the Revenue Department did attract keen observation of each member of the family. Therefore, the atmosphere in the family and the impact of his father's profession had a positive effect on the life of Trisal. It definitely had deep contemplation on his adolescent stage of life, as also his career planning. Trisal feels proud in admitting that, in particular, the element of compliance and subordination in Revenue hierarchy having rare inbuilt standards of service, much better as compared to other identical services of the State Government, was the most important trait that created a deep-rooted impression on him. According to him, in his subconscious mind, though vaguely, that back ground became a cause of his attraction towards Revenue Department, which acted as a forceful motivating factor, and did inspire as also prompt him to aspire for his appointment in the said Department.

In the State of Jammu and Kashmir, mid-fifties of twentieth century was a period known for lot of administrative developments. As a sequel to other similar steps in that direction, it was decided to recruit a good number of personnel, and provide them multi-faceted training, for their deployment as middle rung officers in various departments as per need. As per the scheme, in the year 1959, around one hundred persons, to be known as Naib Tehsildar candidates were selected by the Government, and Trisal was among those lucky guys who formed part of this select list. They were provided intensive training for two years, which included training in Revenue Training Institute Srinagar/Jammu, Rural Development Centre Malangpora (Pulwama), Consolidation Training Center Bilari (U.P.), coupled with practical and field training in Revenue, Judicial and Police departments. After successful completion of the training, the candidates were adjusted in various departments, like, Revenue, Taxation, Co-operative and Excise etc as per availability of vacancies. In this exercise, Trisal among others, was one of those who were allocated to Revenue Department and he was formally appointed as Naib Tehsildar Sumbal (Sonawar) Tehsil of the then District Baramulla. Tehsil Sonawar being a low-lying area and situated just on the periphery

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of famous Wullar Lake is much prone to floods; rendering it comparatively backward and economically distressed. Perhaps because of its backwardness, the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State, late Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad envisaged to concentrate on the overall development of the area, by way of inclusion of the Tehsil in the 'Model Project Area'. In order to give intensive impetus to various developmental activities, the Tehsil was put under overall administrative control of a Chief Project Officer, who would perform as a Major Head of all Departments tasked in the area. Trisal is lucky to have a firsthand experience in that regard and it would be appropriate to share the same in his own words as follows;

"In fact, Sumbal was the initial model of the single line administration, which concept was later on developed and experimented in the vaster areas of Districts Doda and Ladakh, for the first time in the State. Shri Kashyap Bandhu, a renowned Kashmiri Social Reformer and an accredited Freedom Fighter, who had effectively participated in the freedom movement with late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, was appointed as first and last Chief Project Officer of the area, can be termed as the pioneer in the movement. He had rich experience in Dehat Sudhar movement, as he had served as Director General Dehat Sudhar in the first popular Government in the State during the year 1948-49. It was that period when Shri Kashyap Bandhu undertook a massive plantation drive in Sonawari area, particularly the embankments of Wullar Lake, as a measure to protect the area from furry of frequent floods (due to over flowing waters of Wullar Lake). Thus, he was known as a par excellent Social Reformer of his times with developmental orientation, and a staunch follower of Gandhian Philosophy. Association with that type of multifaceted personality during the thresh hold of my service had a deep impact in my personality-development.

"It was a coincidence that during that very period Pt. Pushkar Nath Kaul, who later on rose to become Chief Secretary of the State, happened to be the Deputy Commissioner of District Baramullah. He being District Collector was intimately concerned with Revenue Administration and maintenance of Law and Order in the area. In view of his vast experience, he too became a source of inspiration and guidance in my making as a Revenue Officer. The objective and seasoned outlook of these officers did have great impact on my professional expertise and human dealings, which later on came to my stead on many occasions in facing challenges during whole of the service career."

The Kashmir Administrative Service (K. A. S.) was introduced in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1965 for the first time, with a

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provision of 50 per cent recruitment (at junior scale) through open competitive examination and the rest to be inducted from four feeding services, which included Naib Tehsildars of the Revenue Department. After having served as Naib Tehsildar for a period of around six years, and after having passed the departmental examination of Tehsildars well in time, Trisal was elevated to Junior Scale of Kashmir Administrative Service (K.A.S.). On elevation, he was posted as Tehsildar Rajouri of Jammu Division, and thereafter also served as Tehsildar Shopian, Tehsildar Karnah, Tehsildar Pulwaman and Tehsildar Tral. After remaining as Tehsildar for a period of around ten years, he got his next promotion by induction to Senior Scale of K.A.S, in which capacity he remained posted as Assistant Commissioner (General) Jammu, Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Baramulla and Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Anantnag, before he was further elevated and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner Ramban (Jammu Division) in the year, 1985. In view of his un-blemished track record in Revenue Department in various capacities right from Naib Tehsildar to Additional Deputy Commissioner; Trisal was inducted into the prestigious Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.) against the promotion quota with year of allotment as 1984. Before his retirement from Government service from the post of Labour Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir State, in May 1994, he did serve on some other important assignments, like, Director Local Bodies Jammu, Director Estates Department J & K, Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, and Deputy Commissioner (Central), Financial Commissioner's Office.

The foregoing details are enough proof about the rich experience which Shri Trisal have gained during the period of over thirty-four years of service in various capacities from Naib Tehsildar to Deputy Commissioner; the present-day Revenue Officers could hardly even dream of the same. With such a back ground and having LL.B. degree, Trisal, after his retirement, adopted the profession of Advocacy till few years back, when he voluntarily left this vocation. He had a good practice, particularly in cases pertaining to Revenue Department matters. Some important events during the service career of Trisal, as recollected in retrospect, are being shared with the readers in the following paragraphs.

Shri Amarnath Yatra is one of the important annual features of Kashmir Valley. Every year in the months of Jully- August (between Guru Purnima and Shravan Purnima) devotees from all over the country throng to be part of the pilgrimage. Shri Amarnath cave is one of the important Hindu shrines located in Jammu and Kashmir. The cave is located at an altitude of 3, 900 meters above the mean sea level and about 150 km away from Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir State. It can be reached through Pahlgam town (an important tourist destination

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of the Kashmir Valley), the traditional route or from Baltal, the short but a bit difficult route, for onward journey on foot or on pony back. Now a days, however, helicopter service is also available from Pahalgam as well as Baltal. The cave is surrounded by beautiful snow-covered mountains. The cave itself remains covered with snow during most of the year, except for a short period of time in summer (between Guru Purnima and Shravan Purnima); when it is open for pilgrimage. Thousands of Hindu devotees from all over the country and even NRIs and foreigners visit as pilgrims to the Amarnath cave across challenging mountainous terrain, braving cold weather and difficult terrain. Now a days the yatra is being very well managed through an autonomous Board, known as 'Sri Amar Nath Shrine Board' with hon'ble Governor of the Jammu and Kashmir State as its Chairman, but in the past, it was for the District Administration to take care of the whole affair.

In the year 1972-73, when Trisal was posted as Tehsildar Shopian, he was deputed on special duty as Camp Officer, Panch Tarni (Pahlgam), District Anantnag. As per practice prevalent those days, the Camp Officers of different destinations used to establish their camp offices at respective places ahead of the scheduled yatra dates in order to ensure that necessary facilities to be provided by the State to the Yatries are put in place well in advance. During that year's Yatra period weather remained up set; it started raining profusely causing disturbance in the smooth flow of yatra to and from Pahalgam and the Holy Cave. Severe cold that followed the rains and untimely snow resulted in a few casualties of yatris on their way back from Panj Tarni to Shesh Nag. The then Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, who used to be the designate ex-officio Yatra Officer, directed the Camp Officer to ensure transportation of all the dead bodies to Shesh Nag and arrange proper cremation there with due regard to Hindu rites. Accordingly, the Camp Officer himself supervised the operation. Before shifting of dead bodies, Police officials were made to conduct thorough search on each person as also their baggage in presence of a Magistrate, and to prepare proper inventory thereof. During the operation, the Camp Officer observed a feeble movement of one of the fingers of a female body; thus, he asked the Police Officer, who was conducting search/ examination of the bodies to shift that particular body to Government Hospital located at Chandanwari. Due to heavy rains and severe cold at that time, and that too at a place like top of Shesh Nag hillock, the Police Officer tried to overlook the direction, rather wanted the body to be dumped along with other dead bodies. Besides, it was also a fact that in view of the constant inclement weather as also over fatigue of officials on duty including Police officials, it was quite a difficult task to carry the body of a female pilgrim in that condition (virtually dead), down

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to Hospital. But true to the proverb, 'where there is will there is a way', and as the good luck would have been, the Camp Officer noticed that a Nursing Orderly of the Health Department was carrying a spare stretcher down to Chandenwari; he rushed and got hold of the stretcher. The Camp Officer commanded and made sure that lady be forth with carried to Hospital located at Chandanwari; simultaneously passing on SOS message to in charge Hospital that after providing first aid, the pilgrim be referred to Primary Health Centre Pahalgam, for further proper treatment. Only after becoming sure that the ailing lady would receive proper attention from qualified doctors; the Camp Officer went to his tented accommodation and had rest for the night. Next day, when the Camp Officer returned back to Pahalgam to enquire about the condition of the lady, to his utter surprise, he found her going to a nearby Temple in quite good health. In the words of Shri Trisal, had he not himself supervised the operation and not keenly observed condition of the pilgrims, the feeble movement of a finger of the lady might have gone unnoticed. As a result, her body would have been dumped and cremated along with other dead bodies.

Another event pertains to the period when Trisal was posted as Tehsildar Karnah. Karnah Tehsil, after the turmoil of 1947 in the State, got halved, as the area across river Kishan Ganga got annexed with POK. Since then, the head quarter of erstwhile Tehsil got shifted from Teetwal to Tangdhar. Since then the Tehsil remains cut off during winter months because of Nasta-Chun pass, which has a height of more than ten thousand feet from the sea level. During those days there was only a fair-weather road which connected Tangdhar with Karalpora of Tehsil Kupwara, where from a pacca road led to Srinagar via Kupwara. S. S. Rizvi, a young I.A.S. Officer, was the Deputy Commissioner of the area. He would always take keen interest in development of border areas of the then un-divided District of Baramullah. Once the Deputy Commissioner, while he was on a tour of border area, was stopped at a piquet located at Sadhana Top (Nasta-Chun pass) by Sentry of a local Army unit. It was a usual practice with Army personnel to check identity of persons who would cross over to Karnah Valley, being a border area close to then known as 'Cease Fire Line'. Despite having been told that the visitor was no other than the Deputy Commissioner of the area, the sentry (quite illiterate) was adamant for production of proper pass. The Deputy Commissioner contacted the Tehsildar through wireless communication and enquired if the Army authorities had been kept informed of his visit of the area. In response, the Tehsildar informed that not only the Army authorities (the Brigade HQs) had been properly informed, but the Deputy Commissioner stood invited for dinner that day at Brigade

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headquarters. The matter was then hurriedly taken up by the Tehsildar with concerned officers in the Army and got sorted out. There seemed certain communication gap, for which concerned personnel in the Army including the sentry on duty at the check post were admonished.

Shri Trisal has once shared an incident pertainig to the period when he was posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner Ramban, which is narrated, in his own words, as under:

"I remained posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner Ramban during the period 1985-1988. Those days Ramban was a Sub-district of old District Doda, and comprised old Tehsils of Ramban and Banihal. At present Ramban itself is a District comprising seven Tehsils. As a general protocol, the National events like the 'Independence Day' and the 'Republic Day' would be celebrated at Ramban as Sub-district headquarter. Obviously, it was incumbent on the part of Additional Deputy Commissioner to initiate and activate the process of celebrations to be carried in a befitting manner. As usual, a meeting of all Sub-district officers was called to chalk out the programme of 'Independence Day' celebrations. During the discourse of meeting, it transpired that the Schools were off on account of summer vacations. Therefore, the Education Department, which generally takes care of most of the celebration by arranging the participation of students in display of March Past and other activities exhibiting talent as also entertainment etc. in a competitive spirit, showed inability of its participation. It was strongly felt that non-participation of the Education Department on such National function would cause a damp squib of the celebration. This outright refusal of the local officers from Education Department, participating in the said meeting caused a bit of embarrassment to me besides a feeling of indiscipline as also insensitiveness on the part of the representative of the Education Department; rather it became a cause of disappointment for all other participant officers. Therefore, the very next day the matter was telephonically brought to the notice of the then Divisional Commissioner Jammu. At that point of time Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria was the Divisional Commissioner, and fortunately I had earlier worked with him as Assistant Commissioner, when he was posted as Deputy Commissioner Jammu. Taking a serious note of the situation, the Divisional Commissioner took up the matter with Divisional authorities of the Education Department and directed the Deputy Director Education to immediately rush to Ramban to ensure all possible co-operations from the Education Department in celebrating the National event in a befitting way. The Deputy Director had strict instructions to camp at Ramban till after the National Day Celebrations are over. Thereafter, the function was organised in a successful manner."

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The incident exhibits the discipline and high standards of working in Revenue Department in particular, during those old days.

The most challenging and difficult part of his service career was the period when Trisal was posted as Deputy Commissioner Budgam from December 1989 to February 1991. That was the period when militancy was at its peak in the Valley. It will be in place to quote few excerpts from the book, 'The Men Who Served Jammu & Kashmir, by Dr. Sudhir S Bloeria (page 167-170), as below;

"Remembering that turbulent time he recalls, this remained the peak period for militancy in Kashmir, when the virtual proxy war was being fought by the neighbouring country against India in J & K State. The normal activities of governance got paralysed; euphoria of hatred against India in the major chunk of population of Kashmir Valley sponsored by the known elements of communal forces. The majority population of Kashmiri Pandits was made to flee under a severe threat perception of their security with a design to have total ethnic cleansing. The instances of putting on fire vacated houses and other government structures, including school buildings, where there was possibility of stationing the security forces, was order of the day. The concept of rule of law was a distant dream of the past. The Valley was totally engulfed in the dark clouds of doubt and helplessness. It was chaos and confusion all over and nobody knew what was next to happen. In such difficult and bleak scenario, he carried on with his job, being Deputy Commissioner of Budgam district, as best as one could manage.

"Risk to life was not the only problem that the Deputy Commissioner had to deal with. In the face of prevailing conditions in the field, almost total anarchy existed in most institutions. The lawless situation had come to such a sorry pass that even the traditional coordination and cohesion between the District Magistrate and his District Superintendent of Police got adversely affected. Couple of months after his arrival in Budgam there was a clash between militants and security forces in village Tengpora, a part of his District, located on the outskirts of Srinagar, and in the cross firing nine people died. Trisal contacted the S.S.P and proposed a joint visit to the village for meeting the locals and offering their sympathies on the unfortunate loss of lives. To his surprise, he was told that the S.P. would like to visit the place alone at some other time. However, taking the risk of personal security and accompanied by a lone PSO, he went to the affected village expressing condolences to bereaved families and providing ex-gratia relief to them."

The purpose of sharing such events as discussed in few paragraphs above is to indicate that working of a Revenue Officer in the

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field is always full of challenges, demanding presence of mind and alertness to be the foremost requirement, which may, on occasions, even involve risk to personal security; particularly during such turbulent times as covered under the topic i.e. early nineties of the past century.

Views of Shri Trisal about the working of the Revenue Department and a piece of advice to Revenue Officers of present times, in his own words:

i. "Before dawn of independence of the Sub-continent i.e. prior to 1947, the Revenue Department was considered to be the main implementing tool of the Autocratic Ruler. The Department by nature and working is quite technical and specially professionalised. During those days the sources of income of the State were very limited and like all other parts of the country, the main source of income was collection of Land Revenue, which directly related to Revenue Department. In fact, one could not conceive the grip of administration or rule of the Monarch without the existence of Revenue Department. But now the working of the Department is quite reverse of the past practice; it mainly lacks authority. The main factor responsible for this is the lack of supervision on the part of Revenue Officers."

ii. "The importance and need of Revenue Department in no way can be under estimated in present day scenario of Development and Panning. One cannot expect the thorough passage of objectivity of other Departments without the existence and presence of Revenue Department. In fact, before the advent of Independence of India, the grip of Executive administration was not even conceivable without the presence of the Revenue Department; it would not be wrong to call the Revenue Department as mother of all other Departments. India is and has been an agriculturist economy since times immemorial. Even today, almost 60 % of population of the country lives in rural areas with main source of their lively hood as agriculture, horticulture and other allied occupations. The streamlining of these occupations is not possible without the involvement of Revenue Department. The Department is the source and depository of land records and data directly relevant to agriculture and ailed occupations related to land. However, it is unfortunate that the authenticity of land data as also land records with respect to its rights and obligations, which erstwhile was being maintained and up dated by the Revenue Department, is being eroded and devastated due to in-efficiency and in-difference on the part of persons manning the Department,

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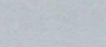
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particularly at lower levels. The Department is quite technical and professional by nature of its work, and unless the personnel of the Department are well versed with up-dated skills as also technicalities, by imparting periodical trainings, it is not possible to ensure accurate and authentic records to be maintained."

iii. "It is therefore, suggested that drastic structural set up of the Department is timely altered. For this, a separate structure of the technical and professional personnel of the Department should be ensured, by way of lesser inter-departmental placement of officers of the Revenue Department. Secondly, the lower rung of field and survey wings like Patwaris and Girdawers are imparted regular periodical trainings and put to rigorous tests before they are given clearance for next promotion(s). Thirdly, the intensive supervision and checks (Partals), as mandated under provisions of various 'Standing Orders' already in vogue, need to be strictly carried out and monitored by officers and officials at all the levels. There is already time old practice of updating records under a planned time table, which needs to be implemented in letter and spirit."

In concluding his suggestions Shri Trisal adds that in order to re-gain the sheen of the Department, it is incumbent on the part of Revenue Officers that they make every effort to ensure accountability of the field personnel in discharging their duties in maintaining and completion of Revenue Records, which includes preparation of Annual Record (Jamabandi), field survey of the crops, as per Girdawri instructions contained in Standing Orders No: 22, 23 and 23-A. It is possible only when there is strict adherence to rules and laws of the Department in letter and spirit. There is also a need to update these Laws and Rules and discard the obsolete ones including circular instructions which have become redundant with the passage of time.

The narrative in earlier paragraphs would reveal that Shri Trisal had to his credit vast experience of the Revenue Department, by working in various capacities starting from Naib Tehsildar to Deputy Commissioner, and serving in almost all parts of the State. He has earned a name as a competent Revenue Officer and is popular among people as well as colleagues of both the Divisions. He is among very few Kashmiri Pandits who have retained and maintained their residential house in Srinagar city, even after the turmoil of nineties of the past century. His house is located in a posh colony of the city, and he makes it a point to put his stay for major part of summer months there. With the grace of almighty the God, he has a small and settled family, and often boasts of enjoying a satisfied retired life.



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S. FAQIR SINGH

Sardar Faqir Singh was born on 16-09-1937 in an average farmer's family of S. Bhag Singh r/o village Pangdour, which formed part of Tehsil and present District Samba; but old District Jammu. As was a usual practice those days, every father would want his son and particularly when he was a single male child, that he be assisted in his own field of activity. But in the case of Faqir Singh, while he was just a child, his father took a vow that his only son will not plough the fields with bullocks, but would devote his time towards education. In the year 1944, he was admitted into a School at village Ben-Glahar situate at a distance of three kilometers from his own village, to be covered on foot on all School days. After passing the primary; he was admitted to Government High School Samba, where he had to cover eight kilometers in going and same distance coming back to home on foot daily. There was so much strain and stress that in 8th standard he could clear the exam in promoted category only; which served as blow to whole of the family. In order to improve upon the situation, and to continue studies from class 9 onwards, it was decided to shift his base to Samba. There, a room was taken on hire, where besides sparing time for studies he was required to cook his own meals. He passed Matriculation examination in the year 1954 and thereafter joined the Gandhi Memorial College Jammu for further studies. (Earlier there was only one College which catered both Science and Arts streams. It was only in the year 1954, that Arts stream was separated by starting a separate unit). After completing his Graduation in the year 1958, Faqir Singh tried to join law, but could not manage a seat in a good University. In the meanwhile, he was got married in the year 1959. As luck would have it, in the same year he got selected as Naib Tehsildar trainee. The selection was made in two batches comprising around one hundred trainees. In fact, it was intended to create a group of composites all round trained people aimed to be adjusted in various departments as per need. After completing multiple training spread over a period of two years, he was appointed in October 1961 as the Social Education Officer Samba. In those days Social Education was part of the National Extension

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Service under the charge of Block Development Officers of the concerned areas.

Once Faqir Singh very proudly made a mention that he remained posted as Social Education Officer for six years and all those years he had to work under one officer namely, Sumnant Singh Jamwal the then Block Development Officer Samba. Sumnant Singh Jamwal was known for his integrity, besides being a hard worker and devoted to his duties. Throughout whole of his service career; Sumnant was popular among people and commanded respect from his superiors as well. Therefore, the association with such a personality, right from the start of his service career, had created a deep rooted and long-lasting impact on young Faqir Singh; which did influence a lot in the shaping up of his future bent of mind.

Due to lack of knowledge or may be ignorance about importance of passing departmental examination of Naib Tehsildars, he didn't attempt to clear the examination, although eligible to appear; more so when Public Service Commission was regularly conducting such examinations. But when some well-wishers advised him to do so, he took the initiative for filling requisite application forms, collected books from friends, appeared in the next departmental examination and cleared all the four subjects of Naib Tehsildar's departmental examination in one go in the year 1967; even though as per examination rules, prevalent those days, one could appear in six consecutive terms for clearing the said examination. Immediately after the result was declared, he was posted as Naib Tehsildar Chhamb, where he remained on duty for a long period of four years from 5/1967 to 5/1971. Posting in Chhamb Niabat otherwise used to be termed as difficult tenure. But the period of post 1966 was; in fact, really strenuous, because public of the Niabat had got dislocated during 1965 war. After the war was over, people returned back to their villages and Faqir Singh had to work quite hard for re-settlement of the affected people.

Chhamb Niabat then comprised forty-seven villages, earlier being part of erstwhile Bhimber Tehsil. In 1947 with the implementation of cease fire agreement, while major part of Tehsil Bhimber became part of POK, those villages of the Tehsil on this side of the State were attached with adjoining Tehsil Nowshera. Later on, considering convenience of the residents of the area, these forty-seven villages were attached with Tehsil Akhnoor and declared as a Revenue Sub-division (Niabat) with headquarter at Chhamb. In 1965 war with Pakistan, people of the Niabat got dislocated. But after the war was over the locals were again

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rehabilitated there; which of course was a difficult task for local authorities in general and Naib Tehsildar in particular. Although there was a separate Department headed by Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner to take care of their specific problems relating to rehabilitation, yet on most occasions local Revenue and Police authorities got involved in day today affairs.

Therefore, the period of posting in Niabat Chhamb at that crucial time was really a tough time for Faqir Singh. He had to work hard and sometimes handle situations quite tactfully in order to win the hearts of residents of the area in those disturbed conditions. He recalls, hardly a few months had passed after his posting as Naib Tehsildar Chhamb, one day the then Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner came on an official visit to Chhamb in order to monitor implementation of ongoing rehabilitation programme. As the old Abadi (residential) sites had been damaged by the enemy during the period area remained in enemy occupation, the Relief Department had made out a scheme to settle the people on new identified sites. A group of residents of village Singri called on the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner and represented that the land identified for their new settlement was under unauthorised occupation of few people of the same village. The officer asked the Naib Tehsildar to intervene, to which he replied that as he had been posted as Naib Tehsildar quite recently, he had not yet been vested with Magisterial powers. The Relief Commissioner insisted that notwithstanding vesting of Magisterial powers, he being a local Revenue Officer of the area should assert his authority and get the area vacated of the unauthorised occupants. So, next day, he accompanied by his staff, some of the complainants and local Police officials, reached the spot and found that around 8-10 persons were tilling the land under reference. When they were asked to vacate the land, they just ignored the direction and continued tilling. He parked his official Jeep at a small distance, sat on the front seat of the vehicle and asked his Clerk to take down a dictation. The Clerk took out pen and a sheet of paper, and the Naib Tehsildar started dictating a letter addressed to the Project Officer Relief Department, Chhamb to immediately contact concerned authorities to dispatch at least one Battalion of Punjab Armed Police, already camping at Chhamb. The letter was dictated in such a loud voice as could reach the persons ploughing land. The whole exercise was just a clever move, but the trick worked. While the matter was being discussed by the Project Officer with Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner on telephone, after a few minutes the delinquent persons concerned had some discussion among them and fled away from the scene. Thus, taking benefit of the situation

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the possession of the land was handed over to the beneficiaries. Such ruse is generally referred to in Revenue circles as "Hikmat-e-Amli" which can be loosely translated as the practical way of working.

For the readers of new generation, it would be of interest to know that erestwhile Chhamb Niabat once again got disturbed in 1971 war. As a part of Shimla Agreement, leaving three-four villages situate on this side of river Manawer Tawi, rest of the villages of Niabat Chhamb located across river Manawar Tawi became part of POK.

Faqir Singh served as Naib Tehsildar Chhamb for a long period of four years. People of the Niabat, although otherwise known to be trouble makers, were higly satisfied with his dealings. Afterall, when he was transferred, the people resisted implimention of the transfer order on the plea that the incumbent posted in place of Faqir Singh was not acceptable to them. The then incumbent Deputy Commissioner also tried to persuade the then Divisional Commissioner to let Faqir Singh continue for some period more, but the Divisional Commissioner is said to have come to the rescue of Faqir Singh by insisting that the latter should not be punished for good work or raport he had established with the public. More details about the event find mention in narrative dealing with Choudhary Bharat Bhushan.

After Chhamb, Faqir Singh was posted as Naib Tehsildar in Tehsil Jammu for a short period, where after he was sent as Camp Commandant in Mishriwala Refugee Camp. He narrated a story about his posting as Camp Commandant in the following words;

"One day Shri Tara Chand Khajuria, who was those days posted as Deputy Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, asked me to accompany him for selection of suitable sites for rehabilitation of people dislocated from Chhamb sector both from this side and across Manawer Tawi. Representatives of the refugees were also taken along. After visiting two three sites, a group of refugees belonging to left Manawer Tawi bank area agreed to accept Mishriwala site with an explicit condition that Faqir Singh be posted as Camp Commandant. As such, honouring the wishes of the people, I was posted as Camp Commandant in January 1972 and remained there till October 1973".

While posted at Mishriwalla Camp, one day Faqir Singh had come to head office in order to sort out certain issues pending with Accounts branch. Few days back a new Commissioner had taken over. Finding Faqir Singh moving in his office, he called the latter to his office chamber. The

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situation the officer faced there, is best summarised, in his own words, as under;

"The Commissioner (name withheld), in a much-frowned mood said, 'you people often waste your time in hankering after the Babus. You grease the palms of Babus and collect money from poor people. You have your own motives and won't bother about the problems of displaced persons'."

The words spoken by the Commissioner were quite opposite to the character of the officer under reference, and had a shocking effect on him. In a very depressed mood he approached a senior Doctor in the city, obtained a medical certificate with advice to have rest; and next day sent an application for ten days leave on health grounds. Sudden non-availability of the officer in the camp affected the working and inmates were at a loss to understand what had happened. In the meantime, Faqir Singh called on M. M. Khajuria, the earlier Commissioner and narrated him the whole episode seeking his help in getting him posted back to his parent Department. Shri Khajuria spoke on telephone to Revenue Secretary requesting him to shift Faqir Singh from Relief Organisation. Revenue Secretary in turn spoke on phone to Relief Commissioner suggesting that it was intended to take Faqir Singh back, as reportedly he was not found useful there. But the latter informed that the officer cannot be spared. At the same time, one day a group of inmates of the Camp approached the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner indicating the problems they were facing in absence of the officer in charge Camp. The Commissioner handed them over a slip addressed and to be delivered to Faqir Singh advising him to join his duties immediately, as his absence in the camp is being felt badly. He however, also assured him that in case of necessity he need not feel shy to use departmental vehicle, in getting himself treated. Thereafter, Faqir Singh resumed his duties; though reluctantly this time.

The officers and officials posted in various refugee Camps had to face lot of hard ships in dealing with the camp mates, who were never happy despite sincere efforts to make their stay comfortable to the possible extent. They were always in agitation mode, would come on roads for minor requirements and often put Government officials to ransom in order to get their demands fulfilled. On the whole, the experience there was not happy for anyone to recollect.

When peace started prevailing after the Shimla Agreement, the Government of India in association with the Government of Jammu and Kashmir prepared a plan for settlement of the 1971 war displaced

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persons. In the first instance, it was decided that DPs of Mishriwala and Purkhu Camps be sent back to their villages, as their villages (Garh, Sainth and adjoining areas) were situated on this side of Manawar Tawi. It was indented that people should move back to their areas and cultivate their lands at the earliest, as otherwise wild grass had started coming up in the lands, making movement of defence personnel difficult. But the people were reluctant to move immediately, in any case not before the coming Baisakhi festival. In order to understand the ground situation and formulate further strategy in the matter, the then Revenue Minister, Pt. Trilochan Dutt called all the three concerned Camp Commandants, namely, Faqir Singh, Rajinder Singh Parihar and Kartar Nath Dogra, to his Chamber, where the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner was also present. During the discussion, at one point of time, all the three Camp Commandants narrated their plight in one voice, saying that they have no say at all. They were all virtually living at the mercy of the Camp inmates, whenever they (Refugees) desire, they make them (Officers) hostage. The Minister took a very serious note of the statement, looked towards the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner in an angry mode and then directly addressed the three Camp Commandants asking them to pack up their records and move to head office immediately. Although it was a difficult task to shift, as the officers were having their offices in tented accommodation located just within the temporary colony of the refugees, yet same day in the afternoon, the officers quite tactfully managed to shift their office to the office of Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, only to find that a new Commissioner had taken over. At the same time, when the Refugees came to know that Government intends to be tough with them, with little motivation and talk they shifted back to their respective areas within few weeks.

This episode had a very encouraging impact on the officers of the whole organisation. At the same time, it may be noted that the Minister understood the situation in right perspective and a minor but quick and timely initiative at his level conveyed the massage that authorities cannot be taken for a ride all the times. Only thing needed was that authority should be asserted and also seen to be effective; and that produced the desired positive results.

Duty at Refugee Camps was a bit hard as one had to deal with people who had been dislocated from their homes and life at the camps could not be that comfortable as at home. Besides, the people had almost no work to do, and as is well said, "An idle man has devils' brain" would apply here. As a Camp Commandant, it was required to take care of the general administration of the Camp, providing facilities to the possible

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extent to make life of the refugees comfortable, including payment of 'Cash Dole' (Cash assistance sanctioned by the Government), timely and adequate supply of ration on the basis of ration cards issued to each family settled there, as also ensuring proper schooling facility to the children of the refugees, drinking water, electricity and medical facility etc., besides maintaining general law and order. Since, as earlier pointed out, with the implementation of Shimla Agreement, whole of the area across river Manawer Tawi had become part of POK, the State Government had framed a policy to settle the families thus dislocated in the Tehsils of Samba, Hiranagar and Kathua by allotting suitable and adequate residential sites and agricultural lands as per sanctioned scales, by making available (State or Evacuee's) vacant lands and/or by getting lands retrieved from persons in unauthorised occupation thereof.

Main profession of Chhamb refugees was agriculture. In the words of Faqir Singh, Chhamb people were of good built, laborious agriculturists and, in a way, hungry for land. Although they were eager for their permanent settlement, but they had put up a demand that they should be settled en-block and not scattered to various locations. For administration it was a difficult proposition as land could be allotted to such number of families as would be the quantum of land available at a particular location. In order to press for their above quoted demand, among others, the refugees had resorted to agitation. The agitating refugees would often block road traffic, not allow civil officers to enter the Camp areas, create hurdles in the functioning of Governmental machinery. Any attempts by the District Administration to tackle the situation would meet resistance. Faqir Singh recalls that once with a view to break the deadlock, District Administration led by senior officers with heavy Police contingent and after enforcing prohibitary measures, reached the Camp area, but had to retreat after facing heavy retaliation. In this exercise many officials including Police personnel got injured.

Besides other incidents in his professional career, particularly while being posted in Relief Organisation, Faqir Singh wouldn't forget the one to which I also got associated a bit. He vividly remembers the date as 11th of April 1974, when he was posted as Camp Commandant Manwal Refugee Camp, and incidentally I (author) was posted as Tehsildar Samba. S. Sohan Singh was the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner those days. That day Faqir Singh, along with other officers of the organisation, attended a meeting in the office of the Commissioner, who after discussing other issues informed of his desire to visit Camps, the next day i.e.12th of April. After the meeting was over, Faqir Singh withdrew some cash from Saddar Treasury Jammu, which he was authorised to collect

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personally only. Besides, he purchased some lime for use in the Camp for visit of the Commissioner. In the process it became almost dark when he started for back journey to the Camp along with one of his clerks, one orderly and two civilian inmates of the Camp sitting in the back space of the Jeep. He also put the bag containing lime in his Jeep, while he kept the leather bag with cash collected from the treasury in his hand. Midway from Jammu to Samba it was felt that the lime bag was creating nuisance, so that was placed on right hand side of the back space and clerk was shifted on front seat i.e. to be seated in between the driver and Faqir Singh. When the Vehicle reached near famous 'Chichi Mata' Temple turn, it just collided with a speedy truck coming from other side. The vehicle turned turtle. The fateful accident resulted in four on the spot deaths, including that of the Gurkha - a young and very active -- driver of the Jeep, while Faqir Singh and his clerk received minor injuries. The on lookers arranged shifting of the dead bodies and the injured to Samba Hospital. As I remember, it was late in the evening and I was playing Badminton in the lawns of Town Area Committee, when the news about the fateful accident reached us. I immediately rushed to Hospital to find dead bodies besides my own colleague lying on one of the Hospital beds. When I approached Faqir Singh, and enquired of him about his condition, I vividly recollect that although he was in a shocked state, but I could read from his face that besides pain of the injuries he had, he was somewhat uncomfortable. On finding me there, his worrisome face immediately got relaxed and his quick response was to hand over the bag containing cash to me for safe custody. I took hold of the bag and also arranged his shifting to my residence, which was located just some distance away from the Hospital. After quite some time, I could realise that Faqir Singh was not much worried about his injuries, but for the safety of the Government cash he had in his bag.

What a sense of responsibility even at the time of crisis? One should envy it.

In the mean time I did inform, on telephone, Sardar Sohan Singh the then Relief Commissioner about the accident and within an hour or so the latter was at Samba to take charge of the situation. Incidentally, later it was found that the truck which collided with the Jeep belonged to in-laws of Faqir Singh. His in-laws on hearing about the accident also rushed to Samba and later Faqir Singh was taken to Jammu for better treatment.

Faqir Singh further recalls a firing incident that occurred in the year 1975. According to him, on the persuasion of Camp officers few families had agreed to move to their allotted area, but the 'Action

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Committee' of the Refugees wouldn't allow them to move. On the other hand, higher authorities were pressing hard for expediting the process of moving the willing families out of Camps. One day when the Camp officers were trying to facilitate the families desirous of moving out, the Action Committee people accompanied by others gheraoed the Chief Camp Commandant and other officials. Steps taken to ensure safety of the Relief officials were resisted by stone pelting. The news spread like wild fire and people from all the Camps joined hands in action against the administration. With a view to ensure full security, one battalion of Punjab Police had been ordered to be deployed. The Force had actually moved for the destination, but somehow got stuck up at Kathua and reached the site at 2 A.M. next. In order to control the situation Faqir Singh, in his capacity as Executive Magistrate had to issue shoot orders and in the process two civilian died. Later, in a meeting convened by the then Chief Secretary, action taken by Faqir Singh was held justified and it was conveyed to handle the situation with a firm hand in order to ensure that Government policy of re-settlement of the Refugees be strictly implemented. Faqir Singh continued in the Relief and Rehabilitation organisation in various capacities' till 1978; which was certainly a long and trying period.

He also recalls that once he called on the then Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, S. Sohan Singh, requesting him for his posting somewhere in the Revenue Department. He was confronted with a question, whether he wanted to earn money in Revenue Department? Faqir Singh is said to have replied, he didn't know if people in Revenue Department earn money; but he just wanted to go back to his parent Department after more than six years' of 'Banvas'. Eventually, he was transferred in 1978 and posted as Tehsildar Recovery, Jammu Development Authority, Jammu, ironically for purposes of recovery of loans yet to be sanctioned. In Government, such things sometimes do happen when competent people are posted on posts like mentioned herein before. However, after serving there for about one year, Faqir Singh was posted as Tehsildar Leh (Ladakh) in the month of August 1979.He described the Ladakh posting as enjoyable after the stressful and long duty in the Relief Organisation. He however, recalls two events during his tenure as Tehsildar there:-

i. At Saspole, a village situate at a distance of about thirty Kilometers from Leh town, Public Works Department had proposed to construct a Dak Bungalow. In Ladakh there was no dearth of Government land. But in Saspole the locals did not allow the P.W.D men to take up work on the identified piece of

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land, because those days the culture of Paying Guest had just started developing and the people were apprehensive that with the coming up of a Government Dak Bungalow nearby their Guest House business would get affected. As the administration was interested that work should start immediately, one day the Tehsildar called the Girdawar and Patwari concerned to his office and enquired from them the reasons for non-implementation of orders for handing over the land to P.W.D. The field Staff in turn informed that local residents were not in a mood to allow the construction. This enraged the Tehsildar, who in a very firm tone told them that they don't know how to assert their authority as Revenue Officials. He then advised them to immediately move along with officials of P.W.D. to the spot with an assurance that he himself would reach there within a short time and show them how to work. Neither the Tehsildar intended to go unless there would have been a serious situation nor he went, but the tactics worked. After passing around an hour or so, the field staff sent a message that the needful had been done.

ii. A similar situation at village Sakti was handled in the identical manner. There a piece of private land had been identified for construction of a Dak Bungalow. The building work had to be taken up immediately, but the owners were not allowing any one to enter the land until adequate compensation was paid to them. Tehsildar visited the site, talked to them in friendly tone assuring payment of adequate compensation and the people allowed the construction. However, care was taken to ensure that the process of payment of compensation be expedited.

These are the two fine examples of Revenue Officer's famous dictum of "Hikmat-e- Amli" - mentioned earlier.

Faqir Singh got his next promotion in June 1982 and in that capacity held the posts of Special Assistant to Commissioner Agrarian Reforms (two terms), Director Land Management Jammu and Kashmir Housing Board and Revenue Attorney in the Office of Divisional Commissioner Jammu. Finally, he got a sort of parting gift in his posting as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur from where he retired on 30th of September 1995.

At the end of the narrative it needs to be shared with readers that when the proposal of writing of the book was discussed with him, he did appreciate the idea, and unlike many others, encouraged me to go ahead, but at the same time expressed disappointment about the present state

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of affairs of the Revenue Department, of which he once felt proud of. He opened up his mind, and also in a way his aching heart, in the following words;

"Although, today's Revenue Officers are mostly well qualified, but they are not well trained how to perform as a good Revenue Officer. They don't pay heed to the problems faced by common man, particularly the rural masses with whom the Department has to deal with in general. They don't know how to assert their authority and generally get influenced by political pressure."

According to him, such tendencies need be checked by providing appropriate trainings and refresher courses, if glory of the Revenue Department has to be restored.

S. Faqir Singh is presently enjoying his retired life with happy past memories and nothing to regret. He appreciates the patronage received by him from his seniors and love from his colleagues during thirty-six years of long professional journey. He feels proud to have remained part of the Revenue Department for such a long period, starting from Naib Tehsildar Trainee and to have retired as Additional Deputy Commissioner. He had seen many rough and pleasant moments; but always remained stuck to the principles which he acquired at the very beginning of the professional career. His posting as Naib Tehsildar Chhamb, then a difficult station, remaining there for a long period of four years and performing his duties to the entire satisfaction of his superiors, his posting as Camp Commandant Mishriwala on a persistent demand of the Camp inmates as detailed in earlier pages, his two times posting as Special Assistant to Commissioner Agrarian Reforms, as Revenue Attorney in the Office of Divisional Commissioner and the Additional Deputy Commissioner of an important District like Udhampur speak volumes about professional competence of the officer. Only officers having clean track record as also professional capability deserve to be posted on such assignments.



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GHULAM AHMED PEER

Son of a **'Peer'** (Priest) of moderate means, Ghulam Ahmed Peer is popularly known by his short name G.A. Peer. He was born on 4th March 1952 at village Salia of District Anantnag in South Kashmir. Undoubtedly, those old days, life in whole of Kashmir Valley was a bit tough, as for most of the winter it would remain cut off from rest of the country. During those times, the sole source of earning and livelihood, particularly in rural Kashmir was agriculture and horticulture. At the same time, not only for the reasons of financial constraints, but on account of horde of other grounds, lack of awareness being at the top, majority of children were not sent to School. Besides extending minor help to their family in agricultural or horticultural activities, they would spend most of their time playing in village lanes or under a shady tree. Very few children, mostly belonging to well of families or those having strong desire towards acquiring education, would find their way to a village School. Since Peer was having smart habits from the very early childhood and a deep-rooted desire for going to School, he was lucky enough to be enrolled in Government Lower High School (which after a few years was upgraded as High School) Salia, located at a distance of around two kms from his house. He vividly recalls that, as was a common practice those days, on the day of admission he was given a test to assess his capabilities, and having been assessed by the Teacher as 'brilliant', he was admitted directly in 2nd primary. He continued to exhibit his brilliance by every time becoming the topper in his class. But as the ill luck would have been, he had not yet completed his primary education, when a great tragedy struck and both of his parents passed away. Young Peer was left all alone in the world, without the support of parents, and in the care of an old uncle who himself was not well of.

Passing through difficult times, Peer continued his studies. Being a hardworking, and also possessing traits of brilliance, he passed his Matriculation examination from the Government High School Salia (Anantnag)with a good percentage of marks. Although he wanted to study further but his uncle could not afford to bear expenses of sending

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him to nearest College located at the famous town of Anantnag (South Kashmir). However, at this critical juncture, a distant relative came to his rescue; he encouraged and provided him with required financial support till he passed his Pre-University Class (PUC) examination from Degree College Anantnag. Thereafter, this distant relative too withdrew his hands; in view of some of his internal financial constraints. Forced by the circumstances, Peer had no option but to leave College. But in line with his cherished desire, he decided to continue his studies as a private student. Thus, in order to provide for a modest living as also to have required finances for carrying forward his education; Peer took up a Teaching assignment in a private School; besides taking up tuition work in spare time. This way, finally he passed his B.A. examination from Kashmir University in the year 1972, as a private candidate, of course, with good marks as always.

As the famous saying goes, 'God helps those who help themselves'; immediately after passing his B. A. examination, there appeared an advertisement for recruitment of Teachers in Government Education Department, for which Peer applied for and got selected. His appointment as Teacher in a Government School admittedly proved as a turning point in the journey of his life, when for the first time he could feel financially secure with no more worries about making both ends meet. At the same time, with financial strength at his back as also his excellent academic achievements and insatiable appetite for knowledge, he made up his mind to push forward his ambition for acquiring higher educational qualification. Thus, he decided to go for Post-Graduation as a private candidate. He had not only collected required books as well as other relevant study material connected with M.A. English and had, in fact, started preparing for the same, when one day Peer had a chance meeting with a young Kashmir Administrative Service (K.A.S.) officer Shri Ghulam Nabi Kanth, who was later inducted into Indian Administrative service (I.A.S.) as well. The latter counselled Peer to prepare for appearing in competitive examination of K.A.S., instead of wasting his effort in acquiring Post Graduation. The advice appealed him, and accordingly, after diligent preparations, he appeared in the next competitive examination for K. A. S. held by the State Public Service Commission. Despite a tough competition, Peer with a brilliant academic record succeeded in first attempt, and on selection he was allotted the 'Revenue Gazetted Service' cadre (1977 batch). After successful completion of his statuary training, he was posted as Tehsildar (Agrarian Reforms) Kulgam in the year 1979, wherefrom only after 3 months' stay he was shifted to Anantnag. As regards certain other important and distinct traits of the

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profile concerning Shri Ghulam Ahmed Peer, the same as observed by Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria former Chief Secretary Jammu and Kashmir at page 142 of his book titled, "The Men Who Served Jammu and Kashmir" are found most befitting to the narrative and are reproduced hereunder;

"G.A. Peer I. A. S. (JK: 1996), is a smartly dressed portly gentleman, with a smiling face and very fair complexion like most Kashmiris. His official colleagues hardly remember ever seeing Peer casually dressed. A soft-spoken person who would rarely raise his voice; his calm countenance, friendly behaviour and genial exterior easily masks a tough personality with great courage and steely determination. In the pursuit of service to the people and provide relief and succour to those in the dire need for it, he can display common capacity to take risks and follow the path less trodden, prepared to face difficulties and challenges. He has never forgotten the years of struggle, deprivation and wants he had to go through during his childhood and early youth. This difficult period of life inculcated qualities of sympathy and compassion in him in ample measure, as also induced an abiding faith in the goodness of human nature. Service to the people is also a kind of worship, has been an article of faith with him."

In the cadre of Tehsildar; Shri G. A. Peer served as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Kulgam, Tehsildar (Territorial) Beejbehara, Tehsildar (Agrarian Reforms) as also Tehsildar (Territorial) Anantnag, before he was elevated to higher assignment and posted as Assistant Commissioner (General) Anantnag in the year 1986. Among various other events during his career as Revenue Officer, Peer has once narrated a typical event; reproduced in, his own words, as follows;

"It is well known that during initial periods of implementation of the Agrarian Reforms Act 1976, people (both owners as well as tillers) were apprehensive about the outcome and did not fully co-operate with the Department. In the year 1980 when I was posted as Tehsildar (AR) Anantnag, after assessing quantum of work considering all relevant aspects, I selected village Irkumoo of Kokernag area (Now Tehsil kokernag) to break the ice. It is a large estate with mixed population of both Hindus and Muslims, where a good number of 'Resumption' applications had been filed. My field staff cautioned me saying that the village is inhabited by many people with Communist influence, and that my predecessor in office named G.Q. Andrabi - an old and experienced Revenue Officer - had once tried in the said village, but failed. Nevertheless, I expressed my determination to once again try and decided to visit the village for which proper programme was chalked out and got notified.

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"On the fixed date and time, when we reached there, people welcomed us. I vividly remember that local Communist leaders namely, Niranjan Nath and Habba Khwaja represented the tillers and were quite vocal. They expressed reservations about the impacts of the implementation of the Agrarian Reforms Act 1976, in particular the resumption part of the provisions of the Act. I made them sit calmly and delivered an inspiring lecture (in Kashmiri language) explaining the salient features and objectives of the Act, including abolition of the age-old intermediary system. I also elaborated provision contained in section 7 of the Act, dealing with resumption, for bona fide personal cultivation by the ex-owners, including settlement by private agreement (section 12 of the Agrarian Reforms Act); which would benefit both the tiller as well as the ex-owner, I added. In the long run both will be the owner of the land they till and there would be no middle men. I appealed them as son of the soil and sought their co-operation in moving ahead in accordance with provisions of important Legislation. They felt impressed, but sought some time to ponder over the issue. Therefore, I decided to extend my stay there overnight.

"Next morning both Niranjan Nath and Habba Khwaja came in the camp and told that villagers got moved by the appeal and are agreeable to process their cases. Thus, the deadlock was broken and I was in a position to dispose of resumption applications filed under the said Act within few days. This way a word went around and we faced no difficulty in other areas as well".

In narrating the event the bottom line message is that in public dealing especially dealing with the illiterate agriculturist community, patience and providing opportunity of being heard by a Revenue Officer always work wonder.

In fact, with rural background and a sympathetic attitude towards oppressed peasantry, Peer performed his duties with lot of enthusiasm, which made him popular among rural masses and definitely earned him a good reputation at the very initial stage of his service career. In this connection observations of Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria, as recorded at page 144 of his book quoted in an earlier paragraph, being quite relevant to the narrative are reproduced hereunder;

"The J & K Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976 came into force from July 13, 1978 and in his first posting as Tehsildar and Assistant Collector Agrarian Reforms, he implemented this radical law with zeal and fare play. As provisions of this statue mostly helped the small farmers, who were generally poor but large in numbers, his dedicated and spirited

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implementation of the Agrarian Reforms Act helped him develop very good relations with general public and establish his reputation as a straight forward, helpful and upright civil servant. This positive image in the public mind was to help him a lot in later years. He consolidated his standing as a competent and energetic Revenue Officer in the next few years. ....."

In performing as a Revenue Officer, Peer has got many interesting experiences, out of which two, as sometimes back shared by him, are summarised as follows.

i. The incident pertains to year 1981. It was initial period of Peer's career in Revenue Department and he was posted as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Ananatnag. A case had been filed before Shri Umar Jan the then Deputy Commissioner Anantnag in respect of a piece of agricultural land situate in village Katriteng, located not far away from Anantnag town. The applicant, who was an influential person of the locality, claimed him to be the self-cultivating owner of said piece of land. He had approached the Deputy Commissioner with a prayer to issue direction to the non-applicants not to interfere with his peaceful possession. The Deputy Commissioner marked the file to Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Ananatnag for enquiry and report. Tehsildar summoned and enquired from the parties; when contrary to the claim of the applicant, the non-applicant claimed that he was in cultivating possession of the land under reference and that the applicants in the garb of the application, intends to dispossess them. Therefore, in order to ascertain factual position, the case was fixed to be heard on spot on the next date of hearing.

On the fixed date, Peer accompanied by field staff visited the disputed site where the parties, their advocates and village elders were also present. The spot inspection revealed that the piece of land was distinctly divided into three parts; while one part was Sagzar (under vegetable cultivation), the other part was vacant while third portion was having a small tin-roofed shed and some dry grass in the open. On enquiry, while the applicant reiterated his claim that he was in possession of all the three portions, the non-applicants rebutted his claim and added that the applicant is trying to disposes them from the land under their cultivating possession for many years. When asked to adduce evidence, 117 persons came forward in support of the applicant, whereas there were only two persons to support the three non-applicants. Out of the two supporters of non-applicants one was Village Chowkidar, who too came forward only when prompted and supported only vaguely or in local language in 'DABI ZABAN'. After recording statements of the witnesses, verbal enquiry was initiated. When asked to indicate reasons for distinct

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divisions of the land into three parts and what was stored inside the shed, the applicant could not give satisfactory reply, whereas the non-applicants stated that they are two brothers and one sister whose husband was 'Khana Damad' of the family, so they have internally allocated one part to each of them; and that inside the shed they have kept few wooden window frames and some stones intended for certain construction in the near future. Thereupon the parties were asked to open the lock of the shed to verify the factual position about material available inside. Both parties went to their homes to bring key of the lock. After some time, the applicant came back with a reply that the key seems to have been somewhere misplaced or stolen. On the other hand, the non-applicants came with a key of an old-fashioned lock with the help of which the shed when opened proved the statement of non-applicants as correct in respect of material indicated by them to be inside.

Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms submitted a comprehensive report to the Deputy Commissioner based on his spot enquiry elaborating that going by the quantum of evidence i.e. 117 witnesses in favour of the applicant and only two witnesses in favour of the other side, it would be difficult to disbelieve the contention of the applicant. But quality of evidence which included statement of a Village Chowkidar and revelations of on the spot enquiry definitely go in favour of the non-applicants. Later, taking note of the report furnished by Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms, the Deputy Commissioner decided the case in rejecting the application.

After quite some time, Shri Peer was informed by an advocate representing one of the parties to the case that the matter went up the Hon'ble High Court, and finally the decision of the Deputy Commissioner came to be upheld, mainly on the basis of spot enquiry report furnished by Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms. The moment this information was passed on to Shri Peer, it was definitely a joyful occasion for him.

ii. Another incident; Peer had once fondly referred to and vividly recalls, occurred in the year1982, when he was posted as Tehsildar Beejbehara of District Ananatnag. There was one Master Abdul Rehman of village Nanial, who had married in village Dareegund of Srigufwara area. In village Dareegund, a land owner had a piece of land measuring eight kanals, which he intended to convert into an orchard; but lacked required capability. Since, Master Abdul Rehman was an energetic and resourceful person, the land owner asked former to undertake the job. They entered into an understanding that Abdul Rehman would not only utilise his resources on initial conversion of the land into orchard, but also bear expenses on fertilizer, pesticides and other processes involved in

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grooming the same; and that the returns to be shared on 50:50 basis. However, since Abdul Rehman was a shrewd person, he made the owner to execute a sale deed for four kanals of land in his favour, but the sale deed was never got incorporated in Revenue records.

For many years they stood true to the understanding and everything went alright. After the execution of late Zulfkar Ali Bhuto ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Kashmir Valley became abuzz with rumours that Jmait Islami in collaboration with General Zia-ul-Haq, was behind the so called 'judicial Murder' of late Zulfkar Ali Bhuto. It led to riots in various parts of Valley, as a part of which there were reports of violent attacks on local Jamait Islami workers including sometimes burning of their houses. Since Master Abdul Rehman was known to be an active associate of local Jamait Islami, therefore he also became a target. One day, a hostile mob attacked Master's house in village Nanial, and not only looted or ravaged his belongings but also destroyed his standing crop.

Owner of the land (under orchard) when heard about the episode, developed a notion that the sale deed by virtue of which he has transferred four kanals of land in favour of Abdul Rehman also would have been destroyed in the act of arson and looting by the irate mob. As he knew that sale deed has not been given affect in Revenue records, so deceitfully he decided to back out from the agreement of sharing of sale proceeds of the fruits. Next time when Abdul Rehman went to see the orchard, the owner stopped him from entering it and flatly denied of any agreement or understanding in that context. Abdul Rehman got upset and when all his efforts to sort out setback failed to yield any result, he was advised to approach the Tehsildar for redressal of his grievance. The incumbent Tehsildar, Shri G. A. Peer had been there for quite few months and had established his reputation of being an upright and fair Revenue Officer; he was also advised to insist for spot inspection before deciding the matter.

Thus, the issue came before Peer, the then Tehsildar Beejbehara for adjudicating upon the same with a specific request to conduct on the spot enquiry in order to know the real facts of the matter. Accordingly, the case was fixed by him for enquiry on spot. On the fixed date and time, the Tehsildar accompanied by the Office Qanungo and other field staff reached the disputed site; where, as per prior notice Nambardar, Chowkidar and village elders were present. When asked to adduce evidence in support of his claim; the applicant, who by then had been able to get hold of sale deed from his salvaged assets, produced sale deed,

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receipts for payment of cost of fertilizer, pesticides, and labourer wages etc. The Tehsildar took Nambardar to a side and asked him to tell, before man and God, the real position of the matter under enquiry. Willy-nilly the Nambardar told that the claim of the applicant was correct. Accordingly, when the village assembly was told that applicant has sufficient documentary evidence and Nambardar has also supported his claim, they too in unison supported the same. When confronted by these circumstances, the land owner also conceded. Besides, as agreed to by the parties as well, with the help of field staff the piece of land was got divided into two equal parts; they were directed to occupy and hold their respective portions as per demarcation made on spot. This way the case was decided and settled for ever accordingly.

In narrating the two incidents detailed in previous paragraphs, Peer has specific agenda to impress upon today's Revenue Officers the need of adopting the age-old practice of hearing and/or disposal of Revenue cases on spot or at least after conducting enquiry on spot. According to him this is the most cheap, fast, transparent and fair way of providing justice at the door step of poor rural masses. Major benefit of conducting enquiry on spot is that generally people won't tell a lie in presence of village assembly. Many times, reality would be revealed on spot without much an effort, which most likely might remain hidden or suppressed in hearing cases in court rooms. Here it needs a mention that the system of conducing spot inspections or enquiries and for that matter disposing of disputes on the spot is neither new nor unrecognised. In the connection a reference is invited towards very specific and befitting observations recorded by Sir Walter R. Lawrence at pages 5-6 of his famous book, "The Valley of Kashmir", excerpts as under;

"My procedure has been to hear and decide such suits in the village where the claim has arisen. Under a Chenar tree in the presence of the assembled villages the claimant prefers his suit and the defendant makes his reply. Then the old men of the village and the headmen of the neighbourhood give their opinion on the case, and a brief entry is made by me which finally settles the claim. ..... . For five years this procedure of enquiry on spot has gone on, and I attribute much of the quiet prosperity which is now growing in the villages, to the fact that money is not spent and bad blood is not engineered by litigation. My system is the old system of the village panchayat. The commonest intellect can tell from the faces of the villagers whether the claim is just, and the 'genius loci' seems to keep both claimant and defendant to the point and to the truth. ..... . A Kashmiri will rarely lie when he is confronted in his village by

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his fellow villagers; he will invariably lie when he enters the murky atmosphere of the law courts."

May be keeping these factors in mind, the framers of the important legislation, 'the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act 1996 (1939 A.D.) have kept suitable provision, namely section 17, which reads;

"17. Place of sitting. – A Revenue officer may for exercising his powers under this Act sit at any place within the local limits of his jurisdiction."

Similar provision, reproduced hereunder, also existed in the 'the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Regulation 1980 (1923 A.D.)

"23. Place of siting. – A Revenue-officer may exercise his powers under this Regulation at any place within the local limits of his jurisdiction."

At the same time para 51 of 'Standing Order No: 23-A - Record of Mutations' categorically mandates for attending to mutation work on spot. The relevant provision is reproduced as follows;

"51. Mutation work to be done on spot. – All mutation work should be done on spot, either at the village concerned or at a village in the same Patwari's circle' or at any other place near the village concerned. The order should always show the place at which it was passed."

These provisions certainly substantiate the concern tried to be projected by Shri Peer. It is felt that these days the age-old practices seem to be missing or given less preference, but the same are required to be seriously followed.

Another experience of his service career deserving mention pertains to the period when Peer was posted as Assistant Commissioner Anantnag, probably the year 1988. As fondly told by Shri Peer, once an elderly person from Kulgam Tehsil (then part of Anantnag District, now itself a District) approached him with an application seeking permission for loping of a branch of a Chinar Tree. As per normal routine, he intended to mark the application to Tehsildar Kulgam for spot inspection and report, before disposing of the issue. As he started writing, the applicant intervened requesting him to visit the spot himself. Peer after consulting his diary informed the applicant that in view of spot visits already fixed, it would not be possible for him to oblige him in the near future. But the applicant was adamant even if he had to wait for two months. Therefore, he was given a date around one and a half moth later.

On the fixed date, Peer visited the spot in presence of the

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applicant and other respectable of the area. The spot inspection revealed that really a dry branch of the Chinar tree was hanging over near his residential house, posing imminent threat to life and property. He called the applicant to his office next day and issued permission letter in his favour in terms of relevant provisions of law. Before issuing the letter, Peer did enquire from the applicant the reasons for his insistence for personal spot visit; to which he replied that in Tehsil office the case would not have been disposed of for months together despite repeated visits there. Knowing about style of working, he had been advised to make the request for dealing with the issue personally.

Here again the underlying idea of Shri Peer in recalling and telling the event is that creditability of a Revenue Officer counts very much in handling public affairs and delivery of justice.

It merits to be reiterated that Peer has the distinction of having been posted in his home District on all the administrative assignments of importance such as, Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Kulgam, Tehsildar (Territorial) Beejbehara, Tehsildar (AR) and then Tehsildar (Territorial) Anantnag, Assistant Commissioner Anantnag (two terms), Additional Deputy Commissioner Anantnag and then Deputy Commissioner Anantnag for two terms (April 2000 to October 2001 and then May 2006 to March 2008). It will be in place to add here that for a Revenue Officer the most difficult situation is to serve in his home Tehsil or District. But in the case of Peer, this proved to be blessing in disguise and he was not only successful in sailing through quite comfortably but his postings in his own Tehsil and District always helped in earning more and more name and fame, which in turn conveniently paved way for him to climb higher ladders of his service career. All this, probably, could be possible due to his humble background and bringing up. In the year 1984, when the author was posted as Assistant Commissioner (General) Anantnag, Shri Peer was already posted there as Tehsildar Anantnag. The former certainly relishes, even at this late stage, certain sweet memories of that period. In continuation to certain information, as shared in the narrative pertaining to Shri Dwarika Nath Trisal, author would like to make a mention of the personal hospitality extended by Peer in allowing him to stay in his official residence for few days till the official residential accommodation allotted to the author became ready to shift. With this background, the author has got firsthand knowledge about the respect Peer used to enjoy among common masses as well as his superiors.

In the eyes of Peer, the most memorable posting was that of Deputy Commissioner Budgam for a period of three years from November 1996. Peer was the first Deputy Commissioner of this District

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under the newly elected Government headed by Dr Farooq Abdullah. There were legitimate expectations of people as well as the State Government of considerably reducing the militancy and also giving fillip to developmental activities. In the backdrop of accumulated administrative experience and his own considerable personal standing as an excellent as well as a straight forward and upright officer, he did remarkable work on ground attracting praise from every one. He himself terms the three years term at Budgam as professionally most satisfying. Among many other happenings, Peer did once share a story, in his own words, as follows;

"During my term of posting as Deputy Commissioner Budgam, particularly the years 1997 and 1998, the District had to face successive drought conditions in view of scant snow fall leading to scarcity of water in Nallahs and kuhals for irrigation purposes. Often there would be inter village or intra villages, fights and dispute between people; especially quarrels between Zamindars of lower belt and those of upper belt were common over use and distribution of available water. Again, it was a common practice for the people, generally in large processions, to approach the Deputy Commissioner for settlement of such disputes. On such occasions, I used to come out of my chamber to veranda, and ask people to send some representatives inside to represent each group, and then discuss with them the problems. Inside office I would listen to each side. Besides considering 'Riwaz Abpashi' and past precedents, if any, I would ask them to suggest some interim amicable solution to the prevailing problem. This way, after having detailed deliberations, we would find out a middle path generally acceptable to all the parties to the dispute.

"It so happened that incidentally many a times when people had come in large number, Gazi Ahmed Pandit the then Assistant Commissioner Central in Divisional Commissioner's office had come to my office in connection with some official assignment, and would be witness to such scenes. He would often remain wonder struck to observe the manner in which the problems, which could have taken any wrong turn if not properly handled, were generally amicably sorted out. He seemed to be so impressed that at some point of time, he is said to have conveyed to the then Divisional Commissioner, Shri Khursheed Ahmed Ganai about me possessing some 'Mantra' power, which I use in tackling such problematic issues. Not only that the Divisional Commissioner had recorded in my Annual Performance Report (A.P.R), a remark on these lines sying, "some people feel Peer had some supernatural power, but he knew that Peer does not possess any 'Mantra' and had a knack and guts to deal with large crowds."

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Thereafter he was posted as Deputy Commissioner Pulwama for a short period before he was shifted to Anantnag. While holding these important assignments and that too during the period when entire Kashmir valley was passing through turmoil, Shri Peer succeeded in sailing through quite smoothly. Despite all odds, Peer succeeded in consolidating his standing as a competent and energetic Revenue Officer with considerable creditability, not only in the eyes of the public but also in the eyes of higher administrative as well as the Political bosses of the State. To be part of the political process in the State by way of conducting Parliamentary Election, State Assembly Election, dealing with tough militancy related problems, carrying out of 2001 Census operations, conduct of Panchyat Elections (April-May2001) and smooth conduct of annual Shri Amar Nath Yatra etc., in his various capacities, during the field postings as detailed above are few commendable achievements to his credit. In the long journey of his service career, besides earning promotions in K.A.S., Peer was inducted into I.A.S. with allotment year as 1995. One can conveniently term it as a rare achievement to have been earned by an administrative officer, particularly while serving for major period in a home District that too during tough times. Here it merits a mention that the militants had made two unsuccessful attempts to eliminate G.A. Peer; the first strike was made on May 14, 2001, while he was returning from a visit to his native village Salia, and second on 15th August 2001 by setting-off an IED on Anantnag - Pahlagam road at village Paibugh when his vehicle crossed the place.

Among the two postings as Deputy Commissioner Anantnag his second term from May 2006 to March 2008 has remained quite eventful and very trying period. Apart from handling many militancy related issues, Peer often recalls two serious situations he had to face during that period, and are narrated in his own words, as follows;

i. "One of the incidents pertained to a mysterious fire in a Mosque, as also burning of Holy Quran, in Shangus area of District Anantnag. Although the Police swept into action immediately, yet it took them more than a week to get hold of the culprit, who actually was found to be a drug addict. It was really a tough time to keep the outraged public in control, for which I had to practically camp in the locality assuaging the inflamed feelings of the local population. I had to use all the tact and my personal influence to keep tempers of the public in check till the culprit was identified and apprehended by the Police."

ii. "The second incident pertained to outbreak of fire in Army Ammunition Depot at Khundru. In the early hours of August 2007, on receiving information about the incident on phone, I along with Senior

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Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anantnag rushed to the spot leaving instructions for the Additional Deputy Commissioner and Station House Officer (SHO) Anantnag to dispatch all available Fire Tenders, Ambulances and passenger Busses to khundru for evacuating population of the affected areas. Within next 20 minutes we reached near the site of incident, but found it well neigh impossible to immediately enter the precincts of Ammunition Depot due to heavy barrage of projectiles, mortars and shells exploding in the area within a radius of 2 to 3 kms. It was really a horrible scene. The most worrying issue was that the area housed the Army School Khundru as well, in which children of civilians from adjoining areas were also studying. Parents of those students on hearing of the fire incident had started gathering there and were very anxious about the welfare of their children. Rumors about expected devastating effect (spreading) of fire within a radius of about 15-20 kms added fuel to the fodder. There were scenes of public weeping and wailing. People all around felt panicky, and fearing for their lives had started leaving their homes and hearths for safe places. Anyhow, with certain concerted efforts we were able to establish contact with Army Authorities concerned. In view of grave public concern, we enquired about welfare of children of Army School, and it was informed that children of the Army School had been safely shifted out of the affected area and sent to their respective homes via safer side of the Depot. The information was passed on to the concerned by replying to their individual or general queries verbally or on phone. Simultaneously, the vehicles diverted from all routes were put on the duty of evacuation of the affected (adjoining areas) population to village(s) they wanted to move.

"The then Minister of State, Peerzada Mohamad Hussain also reached the spot, and an emergency meeting with local Army Authorities and Civilian officers was held to review the whole situation. As a follow-up of the meeting whole of the District Administration was pressed into service of the affected population. Teams comprising senior officers were made to visit every part of the affected area assuring them of immediate and proper rehabilitation; also scotching rumours that the entire area could be destroyed due to burning ammunition.

"Fire kept raging in the Depot for two days. During the process of fighting fire in the Depot, 14 Firemen of Ammunition Depot Khundru lost their lives, while 12 Firemen of State Fire and Emergency Services received injuries. Besides, one soldier and 2 civilians also died in the said fire incident. On the initiative of the District Administration, people from Anantnag town, upper belts of Shangus, Kokarnag, Mattan, Seer and certain adjoining villages did come forward in arranging food and shelter

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for the dislocated population till proper relief camps equipped with medical facilities including Ambulances were established by the Administration. Eleven teams were constituted and deputed to 13 affected villages covering 25904 souls to assess damage to houses, crops, orchards and cattle population etc. After receipt of assessment reports duly verified and scrutinised by supervisory staff, payment of compensation to the affected persons was got arranged from the Ministry of Defence Government of India and disbursed through field agency of Revenue Department of the State of Jammu and Kashmir."

The episode, though gave the District Administration few sleepless nights besides days of hard labour, but attracted lots of appreciation from one and all in handling the situation indeed in a quite professional and versatile manner. Peer feels proud in sharing that the age-old tradition of 'Team spirit' prevailing in Revenue Department was the main force behind the whole exercise leading to minimising miseries, hardships and sufferings of the affected population on account of the un-foreseen calamity.

In addition to holding administrative posts as detailed in forgoing paragraphs, Peer has also held certain other crucial assignments such as, Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner Sales Tax (Administration), Deputy Director, Food and Supplies Department (Now-a day's called as Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department) Kashmir, Director School Education Kashmir, Secretary School Education, and finally the Secretary Health and Medical Education Department Government of Jammu and Kashmir from where he retired on 31st of March 2012.

At some point of time when asked to comment upon the present state of affairs of the working in the Revenue Department, Peer expressed a feeling of disappointment adding that currently in handling public affairs, professionalism and human touch are conspicuously missing from the general behaviour and dealings of officers in general and the Revenue Department in particular. In particular he was critical of the working in the Settlement wing of the Department. Elaborating his point of view, he added that during past few decades, on account of various known and unknown reasons, periodical updating of Revenue Records has not been under taken in respect of good number of estates, particularly big estates especially those situate adjoining cities and towns. With the passage of time as also implementation of various progressive Legislations in the State during post-Independence era the up-dating job has become unwieldy and can be set right during Settlement only. According to him,

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main purpose of Settlement is that all the changes which have occurred during the intervening period are incorporated and up-dated records are prepared for future use. But as per feedback he has through his own sources, he himself still being associated with agrarian society, final records prepared and adopted are generally at variance with ground position, and there is need to give serious thought to the problem, he further added. When asked for some specific suggestions in this regard; he opined that only well trained, dedicated and devoted personnel need be posted in the Settlement wing, rather suggested to have a well thought of policy paper in the matter of tenure and posting in and out of the Settlement wing in respect of all categories of officers and officials, to be followed in letter and spirit.

In concluding the narrative, I would rate Shri G. A. Peer as one of the finest Revenue Officers of his times from Kashmir Valley - the times when degradation in values of the Revenue Department had started taking its roots. Despite heavy odds and setbacks including financial difficulties which he had to face during his early life, he succeeded in getting entry into prestigious Kashmir Administrative Service, by dint of his sincere and sustained hard work. He not only maintained his traits of sincerity and hard work even during entire period of more than 35 years long service but also exhibited great concern for the welfare of the common man and fulfilling assigned job to the best of his capabilities. **In the backdrop of high standards, which Peer continued to follow throughout his service career, he rose from the rank of a Tehsildar (K.A.S.) to a Secretary to Government (I.A.S.) Jammu and Kashmir State. At the same time, he also succeeded in earning a sterling reputation of competence and integrity - a rare feather in the cap of a Revenue Officer in these difficult times; and rarest for a village lad born in an agriculturist family of modest means, who lost his loving parents at the very tender age when he had not completed even his primary education.**



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GHULAM QADER MUGHAL

"Nobody on earth can attain honour, fame or any other high status in life by virtue of his physical strength; until and unless Almighty's hidden support is not there." It is the translation of a Persian couplet of an unknown writer. Ghulam Qader Mughal, a retired Revenue Officer of high repute has authored a book - in Urdu - on his life, titled 'Mein Aur Mera Gaoun' (Me and My Village). This couplet appears as opening lines of the book. Mughal belongs to a remote but beautiful Valley called 'Gool', which earlier formed part of Tehsil Reasi, and District Udhampur. From Gool, the then Tehsil head quarter Reasi is located at a distance of around sixty kilometres, but journey up to Reasi, prior to coming up of the road, was quite arduous and required two days to cover. The village, which has now come up as a small town, is encircled from all sides by beautiful forest covered hillocks in such a way that from higher locations the area seems to be a round piece of land ('Goal' in Urdu language), and that may be the reason that the area came to be known as 'Gool'.

At present, Gool is itself not only a Tehsil but a Sub-division of new District Ramban. As an administrative unit Gool has seen many changes in the bygone era in covering a long distance from a Patwar Halqa to a Sub-division, which are summarised as under: -

i. Prior to 1947 'Gool' area was a part of Niabat Arnas, Tehsil and erstwhile District Reasi; but during summer the head quarter of the Niabat used to be shifted to Gool for six months. In other words, Gool was the summer head quarter of Niabat Arnas.

ii. In the year 1948, in the wake of first re-organisation of administrative units of the State after formation of the popular Government, District Reasi was abolished. As a result, while some areas were merged with the then combined District Poonch-Rajouri, Tehsil Reasi was attached with District Udhampur. This way, Gool area became part of District Udhampur.

iii. At the closing of the year 1965, on the persistent demand of the

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people of this far flung area, after detaching seventeen Patwar Halqas from Tehsil Reasi, and three Patwar Halqas from Tehsil Ramban of District Doda, in all comprising seventy-eight villages, a new Tehsil namely, 'Gool-Gulab Garh' (within the District Udhampur) with headquarter at Mahore came to be created, and Gool became an independent Niabat of that Tehsil.

iv. In the year 1994, Gool became head quarter of Tehsildar Agrarian Reform Mahore, while as Territorial Tehsildar's office was stationed at Mahore.

v. In the year 2006, when vide Cabinet decision No: 153/7 dated 06-07-2006, the State Government effected a major administrative re-organisation, followed by SRO NO: 185 of 2007 dated 22-05-2007, whereby geographical boundaries of the newly created administrative units were demarcated, Patwa Halqa Gool along with three other Patwar Halqas namely, Thatharka, Sangaldan and Kalimasta, comprising eighteen villages were detached from Tehsil Gool-Gulabgarh, of District Reasi and attached with Tehsil Ramban of newly created District Ramban.

vi. Finally, vide SRO No: 443 of 2014 dated 21-10-2014, whereby further re-organisation of administrative units was ordered, Gool was upgraded not only as a Tehsil but a Sub-division as well to be part of new District Ramban.

Gool is also known to be a place of archaeological importance. For miles together, one would find large quantity of stone sculptures around every Spring and Bowali. A place known as 'Ghora Gali' (Horse Lane) is a Treasure Trove of sculptures, where statues of horses of varying sizes with or without riders and some with three riders are littered around hill slopes. Interestingly the shape of those horses is identical. Some details about the site have been mentioned in a News item covered by 'Times of India' in its edition of June 23, 1977. The caption below a photo in the said news item reads - one of the equestrian statues with artistic motifs on the rein and horses discovered recently at Gool village, 210 km north of Jammu.

Basically, Mughal belonged to an average farmer's family having a good stock of animals such as buffalos, cows, oxen, sheep and goats prior to 1947 and even thereafter. Because the product of these animals was the only source of income those days, as such his family members along with their livestock were going up to high pastures every year for about six

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months (Roughly from mid-April to mid-October). Accordingly, he was also moving up and down regularly with his mother especially being her last issue, without having any interest for going to School till he attained the age of eight years. In those old times, sending children, particular in remote areas like Gool, to School used to be the last priority; but in the case of Mughal, it was just a God sent chance. Anyhow, his journey from joining School to completion of education is well elucidated, in the words of Mughal himself, as under;

"Once it was a lucky day for me when out of schedule, I came down to my village with my elder sister to deliver share of milk and butter for use of the rest of family members who were staying at home for the watch and ward of property and the crops .When I reached near my home I met my two cousins who were returning back from their School, wearing neat and clean School uniforms, carrying attractive bags containing books and notebooks. I was much impressed to see them in such a good condition as I was lacking the same at that time. They were quite happy to see me and asked me to visit their School next day to see how School going children were playing various interesting games, besides reading and writing. I accepted their offer and went to Basic School (up to 7th class) Gool, the only School of its kind in whole of the Gool area, and was later on upgraded to a High School in the year 1959. By the grace of Almighty I always stood first in my School up to 9th class and got First Division in Matriculation. Thereafter, I joined Degree College Anantnag and did Graduation in First Division in the year 1964. At that time, I was the first Graduate from Gool Gulabgarh area as up to 1964 only half a dozen local students had passed their Matriculation Examination."

It needs a mention here that while Mughal was studying in 6th standard, his father left for his heavenly abode, and it was his elder brother who not only took him under his shelter and supported him in every respect, but took pains to see that Mughal did not feel absence of his father. According to Mughal, his Brother did everything for him, which even a father would not do for his own children. Besides, profile of Mughal would be incomplete without the piece of information that immediately after passing the Matriculation examination, his elder brother managed to get Mughal appointment as Teacher in a local Government School. Since, at that point of time, Mughal had no desire to join any Government service, rather wanted to continue his studies, so he did not join. Later on, he also received a call to have been selected for undergoing training at Government Polytechnic, but he declined that offer too. In the meantime, Mughal was got married in an adjoining village, although out of turn, but that too did not bring any change in his

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resolve for further education. Therefore, respecting the determination of the young lad, his elder brother not only permitted him, but also provided required financial support in seeking admission in Government College Anantnag. At that time Mughal was the first student from then Niabat Arnas (now Tehsil Gool), who after passing Matriculation examination had sought admission in a College.

Mughal's Journey after leaving the College to joining service in the Revenue Department has been quite arduous. However, in view of constraints of time and space, some facts but in brief are being shared with the readers. It is well said that hardly anybody knows what the fate has in store for him? After doing Graduation, Mughal wanted to join Aligarh Muslim University for pursuing M. A. LL. B., as he wanted to adopt the profession of an Advocate in order to earn his lively hood as an independent entity. This, he had even expressed before the then Chief Minister, Shri G. M. Sadiq, when he once called on the latter in connection with grant of education loan, despite the fact that he was offered to be provided with Government service instead of the education loan applied for, by none other than the Chief Minister of the State. For grant of the education loan, he did try his best; even used good offices of his mentor Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan, who those days was a Minister in the State Cabinet. (Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan was the then sitting M.L.A. from Gulabgarh Constituency, of which Gool was a part, and he had very soft corner for Mughal, as at that time latter was the only Graduate from that remote and backward area).But by the time he was assured of the grant of education loan, the date for admission in the desired course at A.M.U. had lapsed, and the loan would be granted only after an Educational Institute would confirm admission. Then, as advised by Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan, he tried his luck for appearing in the first ever competitive examination for Junior Scale K.A.S to be held by the Public Service Commission. But luck did not favour him here as well; his form was rejected by the Public Service Commission, as his age was found to be short by eleven days (of the prescribed age of twenty-one years). He did represent to the then Chairman Public service Commission seeking relaxation in the age limit on the plea that he belonged to a most backward area of the State and is the only Graduate in the population of more than forty thousand souls of that remote area. Although the Chairman after going through the documents attached with the representation expressed sympathy for him, but at the same time felt sorry for not being in a position to help him, as only three days had been left for conduct of the examination. The development had a saddening effect on Mughal, because there was no alternative for him but to wait for

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about a year to join A.M.U in the next session. On that very evening he called on Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan, and apprised him of the development. The latter while expressing his sympathy, asked Mughal that in the meantime if he intended to join service in any of the Government Departments, he might indicate his preference so that Shri Khan would try for the same. After receiving two initial shocks just before start of his career, he tried to reconcile to the situation, but wanted some time to make up his mind. In the meanwhile, his other well-wishers also advised him to take up any Government assignment which, according to them, would help in creating some additional financial support besides the education loan to be granted by the Government for pursuing his studies at Aligarh.

On the said evening, while in bed but before going to sleep, he had a flash back of his life at his village. During his School and College days, he had often seen Block Development Officer of the area visiting their place, and helping poor rural population by way of executing various developmental activities, such as construction of Pathways, Village roads, Ponds, Irrigation kuhals, School buildings, Springs/Bowalis for drinking water and Panchyat Ghar etc., besides providing employment to the local poor. Mughal had also that type of bent of mind of service to the people of his area in particular. Therefore, the very next day he informed Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan, that he would like to be appointed as Block Development Officer in his own area. The latter also liked the idea, and immediately took up the case of Mughal with Minister Dehat Sudhar (Now a days known as Rural Development), who referred the matter to the Development Commissioner for further action. But the luck did not favour him there as well, as the Development Commissioner told Mughal that in accordance with the then prevalent rules, Block Development Officer would not be recruited directly. In the first instance one had to serve as Social Education Officer in the Department. After watching satisfactory performance as Social Education Officer for a period of one year or so, he could be promoted as Block Development Officer. The matter did not end there. The Development Commissioner further informed Mughal that since at that point of time there was no vacancy of Social Education Officer he would be appointed as Co-operative Extension Officer (Now a days Assistant Registrar Co-operative) against an available post in Arnas Block (the home Block of Mughal) itself, with an assurance that later on he would be promoted as Block Development Officer as a special case. In case he (Mughal) agreed to accept the offer, appointment order would be issued the next day. That once again became a cause of disappointment for Mughal. With ambitious plans to serve people of his

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area, he had made up his mind to seek appointment as Block Development Officer and the plan was being shattered taking shelter of bureaucratic technicalities. In the evening when he met Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan, the former expressed extreme resentment; he is said to have even gone to the extent of questioning the Minister that why the rules were not observed when the son-in-law of a former Prime Minister of the State was appointed directly as Deputy Commissioner? Were the rules applicable when there would be a case of direct appointment of a poor person belonging to a backward area as Block Development Officer only, and did not operate in the case of persons with high connections? The stubborn attitude of Mughal disappointed Mohammad Ayub Khan very much. However, being a very seasoned and mature politician, he not only consoled Mughal, as also assured him that the latter would not leave any stone unturned in getting the order issued. But, as one may have observed a saying, often written on back panels of Trucks, "Waqat Se Pehley Aur Mukaddar Se Ziada Kabhi Kuchh Naheen Milta', (Nothing happens before time and beyond fate), which seemed to have proved to be true here. Although, Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan once again took up the issue with Minister Dehat Sudhar, but he had to remain content with same old reply from the other side that let Mughal join as Co-operative Extension Officer, he would be appointed Block Development Officer within next six months. During the intervening period, Mughal was also offered a post of Mulberry Assistant in the State Sericulture Department, for which he was required to immediately proceed to Mysore for undergoing six-month long training, before his posting in the field. Since summer season had already started, Mughal was not prepared for going to Mysore. Besides, the assignment was not to his liking, so he declined the offer. All these instances added salt to the injury, and for about a week's time Mughal kept himself aloof; he even did not visit any Politician, officer or office. During that period of isolation, one of his friends advised Mughal that since at that time his aim was to earn some money to supplement his resources for undertaking higher studies, and that there was very little difference between the emoluments of the Block Development Officer and that of the Co-operative Extension Officer, he should accept the assignment for the time being. Since the advice was appealing, next day he visited the office of Development Commissioner, to find that order for his appointment as Co-operative Extension Officer, Block Arnas had already been issued on 05-09-1964. Mughal obtained copy of the order on 12-09-1964, and joined his duties at Arnas on 16-09-1964. Mughal, it seems, has rightly titled 11th chapter of his book as "Muqadir Ka Khel Dekheay-Challa Thha Idhar, Magar Ja Pouncha Kidhar"; meaning, 'see the play of fate, started journey in one direction

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but reached the other'. When he had left his home for Srinagar he intended to arrange financial assistance for pursuing higher education at A.M.U., then he wanted to become a Block Development Officer; but as the luck would have it, he had to accept the assignment as Co-operative Extension Officer.

But that was not the end of his struggle in life, particularly the service career. It just happened one day that he went to a nearby Spring for taking bath. There he observed that on one side an old person was cleaning his teeth with 'Maswak' (traditional way of brushing those days), while another person (whom Mughal already knew to be working as an orderly in Revenue Department) was standing aside with a towel, soap and a bottle of mustard oil in his hands. That created a curiosity in the mind of Mughal, as to who that person could be? So, he enquired from the orderly and came to know that the person was none other than the Naib Tehsildar Arnas. Mughal wished the latter and introduced himself. That way with few meetings at the spring they came close to each other, rather became good friends; and the latter allowed former to visit his office or residence as and when he wished. So, Mughal started visiting the office of the Naib Tehsildar off and on, and only after few visits watching his activities, particularly while sitting in court room, brought a sea change in his thought process. Earlier he was of the view that only the Block Development Officer was the officer, who was serving the people by providing infrastructural development. But later on, he observed that Naib Tehsildar was very much and actively involved in solving day to day problems of the people, including settlement of revenue related disputes, providing relief to the victims of natural calamities, providing ration to the public, processing files for issue of P. R. C. and horde of other allied works; in fact, every aspect related to human life from birth to death would be solved at the level of Naib Tehsildar. So, he got convinced that the Naib Tehsildar commanded more respect than any other officer in the area. It may be in place to add here that during those days, Naib Tehsildar, in exercise his powers as Magistrate class II, would even deal with judicial matters arising within his jurisdiction as well up to certain prescribed limits. Mughal was also impressed by the splendour of Naib Tehsildar Arnas, who had an independent complex spread over around eight Kanals of land comprising office building which included besides office rooms, a Court Room, Treasury Strong Room, Guard Room for Police personnel on Treasury security duty, residential quarters for Naib Tehsildar as well as his staff and a big Hall (Store) for stocking Ration for the public etc. The complex had only one entry gate and that was guarded by a Sentry on 24x7 duties. Further, he observed that a Naib Tehsildar, besides being a Revenue Officer was also a Judicial Magistrate class II, Treasury Officer,

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and Rationing Officer etc., and was invariably more powerful and helpful to the general public than a Block Development Officer. Therefore, he changed his mind to be a Block Development Officer and instead developed a burning desire to be a Naib Tehsildar.

Chuni Lal Gupta, basically a resident of Mirpur (now in POK), was the incumbent Naib Tehsildar Arnas those days, who was going to retire from Government service shortly. Therefore, Mughal in a pursuit to fulfil his wish approached, Shri Mohd Ayub Khan who at that point of time had become Revenue Minister of the State, by way of sending a telegram requesting to appoint him as Naib Tehsildar Arnas on the retirement of Shri Chuni Lal Gupta.

Since appointment as Naib Tehsildar was governed under a separate set of rules, Mughal had to wait for a pretty long time. However, in the month of June 1965, he got copy of a Government order where under, in pursuance of Cabinet decision, he was nominated as a Naib Tehsildar candidate. Although his friends and well-wishers congratulated him, but Mughal was not happy at all, rather felt to have been cheated. He was expecting an order for his appointment as Naib Tehsildar Arnas, his nomination as a mere candidate disheartened him, and thus he did not take the order seriously.

When Mughal realised that his desire to be appointed as Naib Tehsildar was not going to be fulfilled, he once again changed his mind and decided to go to Aligarh for seeking admission for pursuing M. A. LL. B. course. Incidentally, during that very period he received a communication from General Department (Now a days called as General Administration Department) intimating that education loan of Rs three thousand had been sanctioned in his favour, which would be released on receipt of confirmation of admission from the concerned Institute. But fate once again played a role, which turned the tide. By the time Mughal was finalising his programme for going to Aligarh, the State of Jammu and Kashmir got badly affected by intrusion of Pak infiltrators, and Mahore Block was one of the worst affected areas. Civil and Army authorities rushed to the area and set up a Camp office at Gool itself, where all local employees were temporarily attached to assist in the functioning of the Camp; Mughal was one among them. With the normalisation of situation, Mughal was relieved from Camp duty by the end of November to join his work at Block office Mahore. As the luck would have it, for the second time his chance of seeking admission at A.M.U. got missed for the reasons beyond his control.

In the month of December 1965, Mughal was deputed to Jammu

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for attending some official assignment. While in Jammu, Mughal, as usual, decided to visit the residence of Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan for courtesy call, who on meeting expressed his unhappiness. The Minister said that he had to take obligation of whole of the Cabinet in getting him nominated as Naib Tehsildar candidate, and the latter had just not valued the same. Hiding his initial negative sentiments about the order, Mughal just said that in view of the disturbances in the area due to intrusion of Pak infiltrators, how could he come leaving all the nears and dears in trouble? The intelligent and spontaneous reply did pacify the Minister, who asked Mughal to accompany him to Secretariat; as according to the former, some orders for undergoing training had been issued, let that be ascertained. On reaching Secretariat what transpired was once again a great shock for Mughal. The Revenue Secretary informed that Mughal along with another candidate had to proceed to JodhPur (Rajasthan) for undergoing one year's training. That infuriated Mughal, who in a fit of rage virtually turned down the offer, in the hearing of the Revenue Minister. Again, to cut a long story short; a Deputy Secretary in Revenue Secretariat - an elderly man and of course an erstwhile Revenue Officer - who had witnessed the stubborn attitude of Mughal, called him in his office room, tried to cool his temper, pulled up his ears and gave a piece of elderly advice, which included, "Noukari Mein Nakhre Nahin" and managed a welcome turn to the course of events. A via media was suggested, by virtue of which, in modifying the earlier issued order, Mughal and the other candidate were ordered to undergo training at Revenue Training Institute Jammu along with a batch of Patwari candidates already under training there. Accordingly, he reported in Revenue Training Institute Jammu for training on 6th of January 1966, which, in fact, was culmination of his story of long struggle of initial days of life. The turn of events detailed in previous pages would lead one to believe that nothing is in one's own hands, fate plays major role in framing future of a person. In other words, the maxim, 'Man proposes God disposes' also proves true here. After completion of training and passing of qualifying examination, Mughal was appointed as Naib Tehsildar Arnas, and he joined there on 30th of November 1966. That way he accomplished what he had desired about two years ago.

At the end of the day Mughal was, of course, grateful to Shri Mohamad Ayub Khan, who even tolerated his every type of rough and tough talk and mind fully and whole heartedly helped him to achieve the target. At the same time, Mughal, as he would not be hesitant to admit, was also thankful to the old man- the then Deputy Secretary in the Revenue Department, who guided him rightly at a very crucial stage of his career; otherwise in his own words, he would have gone astray.

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Thereafter, Mughal did not look back. He diverted all his energies in the service of poor, through providing governance at the door step. He became a popular Revenue Officer always in demand, loved by the people as well as his superiors. In the year 1973, thirty-three posts were created for purposes of implementation of the famous 'Agrarian Reforms Act, 1972'. Mughal was one among the officers picked up for promotion, and he got his first posting after promotion as Additional Tehsildar (later re-designated as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms) Kulgam then District Ananatnag. After serving at various places in the State in his capacity of Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms as also Territorial Tehsildar, Mughal was elevated to next stage in the year 1985, when he was posted as Assistant Commissioner Leh (Ladakh). Again, w.e.f.21-08-1993, he got his next higher assignments as Custodian Evacuees Property, Jammu, and then Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Joint Settlement Commissioner, Jammu, Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Joint Agrarian Reforms Commissioner, Jammu, and finally retired on superannuation on 30-04-2001 from the post of Custodian General Jammu and Kashmir. Post retirement, Mughal was appointed by the Government as a Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Human Rights Commission for a period of three years, which term ended on 31-05-2004.

Thus, Shri Mughal has served in the Revenue Department for a long period spread over thirty-five years and almost in every part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and so are his varied experiences; a few of which are recounted in the following pages.

In the first instance, he had expressed high regards for his Instructor in the Revenue Training Institute in the following words: -

"During the course of my training in Revenue Training Institute Jammu in the year 1966, I was greatly impressed with the hard work and efficiency of (name withheld), the then Instructor (Girdawar) of the said Training Institute. Because of his good knowledge, rather command over Revenue Department's Rule and Regulations and deep experience about land Settlement, he exclusively imparted training not only to Patwari and Naib Tehsildar trainees but also to the first batch of K.A.S. Officers of 1965-66, in an efficient manner; as a result of which all of them proved very successful Revenue Officers later on.

"In addition to this, he passed the required departmental examinations by Naib Tehsildari and Tehsildari standards within the shortest possible time and got promotion rapidly till he achieved the rank of a Tehsildar from the post of a Girdawar; as such he became a role model for me as a result of which I followed him strictly till I also reached

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the same stage. Thereafter, because of his hard work, efficiency, and competency, he was inducted in K.A.S. and finally retired in the Super Scale of the service in the rank of Special Secretary to Government. I ambitiously followed him till I also reached the same rank."

In the same vein, he once quoted Shri Kashi Nath Boni the then Tehsildar Mahore in the following words: -

"During my first posting as a Naib Tehsildar in Sub-divisional Naibat Arnas for about two years, I didn't take much interest in office routine work even in day today hearing of court cases, whatever the clerks would write or record I would put my signatures over it without thoroughly going through its contents.

"Then in the year 1968, I was transferred from Arnas to Naibat Mahore where Shri Kashi Nath Boni (an old and well experienced person) was posted as the Tehsildar, whom I observed going deeply through the contents of each letter or document before taking action on it by way of writing reply or passing directions under his own hand. Whereas, while hearing court cases he would record the proceedings or pass interim orders under his own beautiful hand in Urdu without any assistance of the clerical staff. After observing this self-dependent style of working of my Tehsildar, I was deeply impressed and felt sorry for wasting my earlier two years just in an "Officer Shahi" mode. Thus, following the footsteps of my Tehsildar, I changed my style of work, by way of holding my pen firmly; first reading and then writing documents and even the Judgments under my own hand till my retirement, as a major Head of Department proving a Persian verse about use of pen to be true and correct, translated as below:-

"Translation: the pen says that I am the king of the world, who so ever uses/holds me in his grip /hands firmly; I take him to the highest/ richest position."

Similar other sentimental experiences shared by him include the following few;

i. "Since my childhood I had been observing that village Chowkidar would come to our Mohalla every year in the month of Maghar (roughly December), and while standing on a high commanding spot he would call some persons by name directing them to go to the residence of the Patwari Halqa Gool by next day to carry his record etc to Tehsil HQ Reasi for the winter season .The same Chowkidar would again come to our Mohalla in the month of Baisakh (roughly April)and would call some selected persons by name directing them to go to Reasi by next day to bring back the record etc of the Patwari Halqa. The persons so called for

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'Baigar' (free service) had no option but to comply without getting any wages, even meals during transit days. Besides, whenever the Girdwar circle or the Naib Tehsildar Arnas was visiting Gool area the same village Chowkidar would come to our Mohalla and ask some selected persons to arrange ration, such as rice, milk, butter, and chicken for the camp of the visiting officer(s).

"Those troublesome traditions had created very deep impressions in my mind, and during my service tenure as Naib Tehsildar /Tehsildar, I tried my level best that people should get rid of those bad traditions. How much successful I was in this attempt may be well known to the people of Gool Gulab Garh area alone, where I have served for a long period of around fifteen years."

ii. "In the Year 1972, I was posted as the Naib Tehsildar Gool and functioning as a Rationing Officer as well. Being quite young, below thirty years of age, I was harsh particularly to those who were corrupt and looting the poor and innocent people of our area. The residents of Gulab Garh area about 120 kms away from Gool, were also getting their ration items from Food Store Gool through their Ration Dealers on the permits being issued by the Naib Tehsildar Gool, as there was neither any vehicular road ahead of Gool nor there was any Food Store in that area. Reportedly a dealer for Gulb Garh area had partially sold the ration in the bazaar, and when the left out rationees reached Gool to get their ration items, the said dealer misled them by saying that due to shortage of food stock in the store, he has not drawn his full quota so far, and asked them to go back and come again whenever he would inform them. But those rationees instead of going back approached me. On seeing their plight, I called the said dealer and started beating and abusing him like this, "Oh, Susray (Father in law), where have you kept the ration of these poor people and why you are telling a lie and misleading them"? The over clever and cunning dealer didn't give me more time to abuse him further and rather shamelessly and boldly replied, "I will be fortunate enough if I get a son in-law like you". On hearing the reply, I felt ashamed for what I had said and restrained myself from use of such type of language in future. Thus, this event became a turning point for me to use civilized language till now."

iii. "While I was posted as Naib Tehsildar Arnas, it was a routine that Revenue Officers would usually go out on tour in the months of April - May and September - October. That was done for many reasons, including firstly, that during the period generally people would be available in their villages, as otherwise they might have left for higher reaches along with

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their cattle. That would facilitate the conduct of crop inspection (Partal Girdawri), attestation of mutations and other allied business, which is better done in the presence of people of the area Secondly, assessment about the condition of crop could be made during that period in a better way; so as to keep higher authorities informed of the same for projection of demand of ration to be provided for the area for the lean season."

Mughal, particularly when he remained posted in Tehsils of Gool Gulab Garh and Reasi, where he had spent around fifteen years both as Naib Tehsildar and Tehsildar, was known for tough action against miscreants, goons including erring officials. Sometimes, he would not hesitate to be harsh on the wrong doers and even deal physically. Although, he had always acted with clear intentions and with a view to set things right in the interest of public good, yet at a later stage he did realize that type of behaviour to be unfair, and decided to desist from resorting to such an action in future. It would not be practicable to narrate all, but mention of at least two such events, is necessary.

i. "Once, during the year 1967, Patwari of an adjoining Patwar Halqa was informed of his tour program through a written letter, sent at least a week's time in advance. The Patwari was asked to inform all villagers to be present in the camp during the course of crop inspection (Partal Girdawri) and attestation of mutations. In the words of Mughal, "on the appointed day, after undertaking on foot journey, I reached the village in the evening, when Namberdar, Chowkidar and a few respectables of the village were present. After night stay, next day when I started for the inspection, it was found that very few people were there. On enquiry from the Chowkidar, it was told that people of that particular village, despite having been informed, would prefer to engage themselves in physical exercise than to come to a camp of Officers. I took a serious note of their non-co-operation, and on return to headquarter, I initiated a process under section 132 of the Land Revenue Act. After ascertaining details from the field staff, a show-cause notice was issued against all the persons who were found guilty of noncompliance of the summons to attend the camp. That created a ruffle, and people started coming to the office in lines. On the fixed date of hearing when all came to be present, they were made to understand that their presence in a camp of a Revenue Officer was in their own interest to safe guard and watch their individual as well as general public interests. Finally, they admitted the fault, pleaded for forgiveness and filed an affidavit, agreeing not to default in future.

"After about fifteen days from the date the file was finally disposed of; one day the then Sub-divisional Magistrate Reasi (Shri Ashok

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Kumar, who later rose to the rank of Chief Secretary of the State), reached Mahore on a surprise visit. In the cover of inspection of office, the Sub-divisional Magistrate started perusing papers and files available in the office, and finally caught hold of the file under which action under section 132 of the Land Revenue Act was initiated against the defaulting people. After going through the whole file, the Sub-divisional Magistrate reportedly took out an application from his papers and handed over the same to Mughal for giving reply to the allegations mentioned therein, then and there. After reading the contents Mughal got infuriated, as there was not an iota of truth in the accusations made therein, and at the same time that was the first and that too totally baseless complaint against him since the time he had joined the Government service. The application contained serious, but false and frivolous allegations. Anyhow, after consoling himself and recounting elders' saying that' "Allah ke Ghar Mein Daer hai Andher Nahin", he cooled his tempers, and told the Sub-divisional Magistrate, "I didn't want to give any reply; in case after perusal of the file and ascertaining facts, I am found to have committed any mistake or have done anything wrong with Zamindars, I may be awarded punishment as warranted under rules." The Sub-divisional Magistrate had directly summoned the persons named in the application, for their presence at the Niabat headquarter. Therefore, he asked the officials to call for them, and on search a few did turn up as well. When the complainants entered the room, Mughal thought they might hesitate to get themselves put to question in his presence, so he left the room voluntarily. However, as told later on, the complainants simply deposed that out of the contents of the application, the only truth was that they were summoned, for default of their non-presence in the Camp of the Naib Tehsildar and they were made to attend the office on two-three dates till all did not attend. They declined to accept other contents of the application or having signed/put thumb impression on the same, rather added that they had never filed any such complaint."

Mughal further added, "I neither was interested to know nor enquired as to what fate the application met, but in any case, the incident had a demoralising effect on me. However, later I came to know that same was the handiwork of a local Government servant, whom God gave a severe punishment though after a gape of about twenty-five years, when he was transferred to a quite far of place on the basis of a similar frivolous complaint."

ii. In the year 1970-71, when he was posted as Naib Tehsildar Mahore, once Mughal was on a tour of village Tulli Banna - a farthest area of the Tehsil. While gathering general information, he was informed that

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the Patwari posted at that particular time was not having good official reputation and would harass the public with motive of extracting illegal gratification. Mughal made up his mind to act against the Patwari, and was in search of some solid proof for establishing his misconduct. When he was conducting checking of harvest inspection, in presence of general public, it was noticed that against many khasra numbers owned by the State, the column pertaining to details of ownership and cultivation had been kept blank. At the same time, the Patwari, despite the period of Girdaweri (Harvest Inspection) having been over, had also kept the current entry column blank by not putting 'Khat - Challepa', thus leaving a scope for making any entry later on. While as, against many other khasra numbers unauthorized occupation by some zamindars over hundreds of kanals of State lands had been recorded. The Patwari was admonished in strong words for the acts of omission and commission, in public view, and asked to explain his conduct; to which he had nothing to say. So, a note was recorded in red ink, by the Naib Tesildar on the register Girdaweri itself, that the space had been left blank intentionally, for fulfilling illegal motives. When the public observed that action had been taken against the Patwari in real sense, their morale got a boost. Taking a cue from the circumstances, one of the zamindars amongst those sitting in the camp got up and complained that only a few days back the Patwari had taken a woolen chadder from him, which the Patwari was wearing at that moment. Mughal acted promptly, and confiscated the piece of woolen chader from the Patwari and kept the same on suparddari of village Headman (Namberdar Deh). During lunch break, after Mughal had finished his meals, the Patwari while finding him alone entered the room, caught hold of his feet and begged to be pardoned. At the same time, the Patwari took out a bundle of (currency) notes from his pocket and tried to thrust the same in the pocket of Naib Tehsildar, who in a very high pitch of voice called the Namberdar in; and hearing the Naib Tehsildar, not only the Namberdar but Girdawer and few zamindars also rushed in. In presence of all of them, process for confiscation of the bundle of notes was also initiated, and a complete note on the whole episode along with 'Fard Zabti' (confiscation note) prepared. Taking note of the situation the Patwari fled away from the scene. Therefore, further proceedings for the day were deferred, and Mughal returned to headquarter to find that the Patwari had already reached there and had (mis)informed the Tehsildar. But, before the Tehsildar could have said anything, the Naib Tehsildar handed over to him the detailed written report about the incident along with confiscated register Girdawri, woolen chader, and the bundle of notes etc. The Tehsildar, after going through the report and finding that there was no scope of going back, forwarded the papers to the

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Sub-divisional Magistrate Reasi, who immediately attached the Patwari to his office. Later it was found that the Patwari was related to the then Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, and on account of the fact that after few months Mughal was also posted out from that Tehsil, the Patwari succeeded in getting the case hushed up.

Although Mughal was satisfied that he had played the role to the fulfilment of his conscience, yet there was another angle of the episode. After the close of the financial year, Mughal was conveyed adverse remarks recorded in his annual confidential roll for that year, wherein the then Deputy Commissioner had termed the officer to be an "average officer, who fails to understand things in true perspective". Mughal represented his case before higher authorities for expunging the adverse remarks; while explaining the background and attaching documents concerning proceedings initiated by him against the Patwari, as also copies of remarks recorded on monthly tour diary of Mughal by the same Deputy Commissioner as "Excellent". Of course, the adverse remarks were expunged, but that episode cautioned Mughal to deal with delinquent officials himself in future, and not to hand over them to others.

In line with other retired Revenue Officers, Mughal has also got a feeling that image about the functioning of the Revenue Department has gone down the drain and something really needs to be done to restore the same. Suggestions in this regard, in the words of Mughal, are enumerated hereunder;

"No doubt today's Revenue Officers up to the level of Naib Tehsildar/Tehsildar may be more qualified and intelligent than those of the previous times. But as per my knowledge and observation, they have a great shortcoming, as generally, they are not well versed with Urdu language; whereas the basic record of the Revenue Department i.e. Patwar record is in Urdu. Due to this deficiency most of the directly recruited Tehsildars (K.A.S Officers) and the Naib Tehsildars, who can hardly read and write even a single line of Urdu have literally become subordinate to their subordinates i.e. Patwaris/Girdawars. Often it has been observed that the Patwaris call the concerned persons, in whose favour mutations are required to be attested, at their residence; meanwhile the Girdawar and Naib Tehsildar/Tehsildar also reach there. The Patwari, after getting the fixed fee etc and the signatures of the concerned person(s) on the mutation sheet, relieves them. Thereafter, Girdwar/Patwari himself writes down the order in Urdu on the mutation sheet on behalf of Naib Tehsildar/Tehsildar, and the officer puts his signature on the mutation order without knowing the contents. This type

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of working of present times Revenue Officers has lowered down the honour and prestige of the Revenue Department which it was enjoying in the past particularly till eighties of the past century. Adding salt to the injury, it has been noticed that even some of the Patwaris lack knowledge in Urdu, and thus have become dependent on over-aged, retired Patwaris or some daily wagers who are Urdu knowing. In his considered opinion, only such officers should be posted as Naib Tehsildar or Tehsildar in the field as are well versed with Urdu language, so that the Department is saved from further disgrace."

As per the provisions of Standing Order No: 22 (Hidayat Girdwari) a Patwari is legally bound to visit every village under his jurisdiction twice an year i.e. during Rabi and Kharief crop and to inspect each khasra number (Field) to assess the condition of crops and to know the changes, if any, with regard to transfer of ownership /tenancy etc., but now a days the Patwari is not in a position to visit any village of his Halqa even once in two years which has created a great setback to the working of the Department as also its officials.

In order to restore the previous prestige and honour of the Revenue Department, he feels, the Patwari Halqa and Girdawar circle should be left to do their basic duties only which are assigned to them under the provisions of Hidayat Girdwari, Hidayat Jamabandi and the provisions of Land Revenue Act (Samvat) 1996 and a separate organization be set up for performance of miscellaneous duties like land acquisition etc. A separate organisation can easily be set up for miscellaneous work of the Department out of the surplus staff which has been created from time to time since last land Settlement operations of 1965-66 Samvat. (1909-10 A.D.). This would involve a simple process of re-organisation.

As a follower of humanism, Mughal is also known as a secular and social activist, and these traits did exist in him even during his service. People of the areas where Mughal has served do tell stories about his acts of humanism and secularism. There are in-numerable instances of his association with Muslim Peers and Faqirs as also Hindu Sadhus, besides his involvement in construction of Mosques in the area on voluntary contribution basis, in local language known as 'Halla Sheri; and some of such instances do find mention in his own book as well. But similar treatments to his Hindu brethren of the area are worth mentioning in chronological order, to depict his true secular character. A brief account of a few, out of so many, such cases in point, as gathered from reliable sources, is as under;

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i. In the year 1964 when he was posted as Co-operative Extension Officer Arnas, a Sadhu named Baba Kali Charan came into his contact. The Sadhu belonged to the State of Orissa, and only a few years back had come to Arnas, where he was putting up in the ruins of an old Fort. They would often sit together, discuss worldly as well as Godly affairs, and at times Mughal would provide some financial help for his day today expenses. Later on, in the year 1966-67, Mughal was posted as Naib Tehsildar Arnas, and the Sadhu was still there. On the basis of his internal source information, it came to his knowledge that out of the money the Sadhu would collect from people as alms, he (the Sadhu) was secretly helping a poor Muslim family. That definitely created more good will in the mind of Mughal for the Sadhu. Little later, Mughal got constructed a Kutia (Hut) for the Sadhu, besides installation of an enclosure (Cement Stand) of 'Tulsi Mata' in compound of said Kutia.

ii. Again, when Mughal was posted as Tehsildar Mahore, papers for acquisition of land falling under Slal Project were under preparation. An old temple, said to have been constructed by General Zorawar Singh, located in village Arnas was also part of the project. Pujari of the Temple one, Bharti wanted compensation for the Temple to be paid to him, but he had no legal rights for the same. Therefore, in order to ensure that compensation would not be misappropriated, Pujari was got declared as Manager of the property on an explicit assurance that the amount received would be utilised for construction of another Temple in lieu of the old one. Accordingly, Mughal saw to it that the assurance is fulfilled, and as a result an impressive Temple came up in new Arnas. People of the area, particularly Hindus of Arnas, do remember Mughal for this act of benevolence on his part.

iii. As a part of his trait for humanism; Mughal is also known for extending helping hand to the people of his area in getting their problems solved, irrespective of cast and creed, high and low. Therefore, after his retirement from Government service, often he would be seen, surrounded by group of persons, roaming in Secretariat and other Government offices in following up genuine issues of the people belonging to Gool -Arnas area in particular. That is why during the general elections to the State Legislature held in the year 2008; people compelled him to contest election from Gool-Arnas constituency. Therefore, in respecting sentiments of his well-wishers, he did contest, but unfortunately lost with a minor margin of votes, for the reasons, according to him, not worth mentioning. However, he feels proud in boasting that on account of his whole hearted and concerted efforts for genuine rights of the people, the area, which earlier comprised four

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Niabats only, has now got two Sub-divisions, four Tehsils and dozens of Niabats, besides two Degree Colleges - an achievement never thought of by the local populace, even a decade ago.

Concluding the narrative; it may be mentioned that Shri Ghulam Qadir Mughal is enjoying his retired life in a very satisfying manner, while staying put at Gool itself. He has not left his roots. He has built there a beautiful house, which is quite away from the hustle and bustle of urban townships; and, obviously, absolutely free from every type of pollution. Being son of a 'Farmer' he himself has now become a 'Farmer', but of course, a "Progressive Farmer", and one has reasons to envy his life style at this age; quite comfortable and contended.



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MUMTAZ AFZAL

Mumtaz Afzal is the one among the officers, particularly few Revenue Officers, belonging to Kashmir Valley whom the author knows thoroughly and with whom the latter has got a long and lasting association. While, in School as well as service records he is known by this name, but his friends, colleagues and admirers do fondly call him by short name, Mumtaz or Mumtaz Sahib. He belongs to a well off upper middle-class family of Sopore, the famous apple town of Kashmir, of course, with a rural background. Born on March 7, 1945, he had his education right from Primary School to Graduation at Sopore itself. Since all along he had brilliant academic record, so elders in a fairly joint family, among whom he was brought up and much acclaimed, were particular that he should study Law and thereafter join politics. On the contrary Mumtaz, had least interest in politics and intended to make his own place by joining Government service. Therefore, in tune with his cherished desire, he joined Aligarh Muslim University to pursue higher studies in his favourite subject and completed Masters' Degree in Economics with merit. Immediately thereafter, he received an offer for appointment as Statistician in Planning Department of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, which he accepted and joined his place of posting in the month of January 1968. In recognition of significance of 'Gazetteer' and on the pattern prevailing in rest of the country, 'State Gazetteers Unit for Jammu and Kashmir' was established in the year 1970 and Mumtaz Afzal, among few others, got the opportunity to become a founder officer of the State Gazetteers Unit.

As once fondly shared by Mumtaz himself, right from his adolescence; he had developed a deep-rooted desire to serve in Revenue Department. In fact, at a very young age he got impressed by the respect and authority Revenue Officials would command among village folks, in particular, during those old days. Actually, during his School and College days he had often observed working of Revenue Department officials; when many times camps of subordinate Revenue Officer(s) would be held in the lawns of his parental house. In these camps, besides the Revenue

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Officer, Girdawar Circle, Patwari Halqa, Namberdars, Chowkidars and villagers would participate. He had been a keen observer of the way issues pertaining to poor rural masses would be attended to, settled or got sorted out while holding open public Darbar and most of the times amicably. The sense of public service in solving, sometimes, even complicated problems at the door steps of people, as also the authoritative glamour of officials of Revenue Department definitely did create a deep impact in his adolescent period itself. As such, in line with his aptitude for service to the poor, he got his services shifted to Revenue Gazetted Service; where, after successful completion of training in Revenue Training Institute Srinagar, he got his first posting as Tehsildar Karnah in the month of April 1979. For him it was culmination of a childhood dream come true as also the starting point of a long journey as a 'Revenue Officer'. In the cadre of Tehsildar, besides Karnah Mumtaz remained posted as Tehsildar Pahalgam, Tehsildar Tangmarg, Tehsildar Handwara (two terms) etc.; before he got his first elevation in the year 1989, and was posted as Assistant Commissioner (G) Anantnag with special powers as Sub-divisional Magistrate for quite vast and an important Tehsil of Kulgam.

In the words of Mumtaz Afzal himself, in the context of service career the period of thirteen years from 1979 (joining as Teshsildar Karnah) to 1992 (elevation and posting as Deputy Commissioner Budgam), was the period which he terms as very crucial. During this period, he had occasions to face certain tough situations, but at the same time those occasions also provided ample opportunities to serve the people as well as to learn a lot; which in turn shaped him to become a true 'Revenue Officer', he admits. In this context he has shared few events which; in his own words, are reproduced hereunder;

i. "On receiving my first posting order as a Revenue Officer (Tehsildar Karnah) - a tough station those days in particular, I started my journey on 15th of April 1979. In fact, it was not the right time for a travel to that area, as major part of the hilly route was still snow-covered. It was really a hell of the job, rather a great challenge in itself to traverse, because at places there was still 6-8 feet deep snow. But true to the lesson taught during training period, I braved the challenge and after overcoming difficulties reached Tehsil headquarter at around 10 P.M. on 3rd day of starting from Sopore. Within a few months of my stay there, I was confronted with a new experience of my career in the Revenue Department. There arose a dispute about the boundary of two villages namely Hajitra and Kandi, involving a large piece of 'Kahcharai' (grazing) land. The disputed piece was in fact a vast hillock, and in such situations, it

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is very difficult to correctly demarcate boundaries. Anyhow, I proposed for a spot visit, and on the fixed date when I reached there; to my utter surprise, I found thousands of people having gathered on both sides. I heard representatives of both the parties and tried to persuade them to settle the matter between themselves, but failed. Thereafter with the help of available Revenue records, I initiated process for demarcation. It took us two days to reach to a conclusion, but the matter did not end, because residents of both the villages claimed their exclusive right over the disputed piece of hillock to graze their cattle in exclusion of the other party. Therefore, Wajib-ul-Arz - an important constituent of 'Record-of-Rights' was referred to and the parties advised to follow the tradition as recorded therein. Both the parties honoured and welcomed the outcome. I was told that the on some early occasions as well the issue had cropped up but every time it was tried to be sorted out as a stop gap compromise. This time the issue had been really dealt with in its right perspective and settled once for all. This way the people got impressed by the decision, being based on authentic Revenue records and recognised principals, and it settled a highly sensitive and a perennial problem in the far-flung area without any litigation. It can be termed as a good example of justice at the door steps."

ii. "After few months of my stay at Karnah, I was posted as Tehsildar Pahalgam - a famous tourist place of the Valley. It was summer season and achievement of targets fixed for procurement of Shali (paddy), commonly known as 'Khush Khareed' was the major assignment at that point of time. An influential person (name withheld) of the Tehsil had taken advance payment for supply of 125 quintals of paddy, but avoided to meet the requirement. It was learnt that he, in fact, has invested the money in cultivation of Bhang (cannabis) and in the past too he has done similar act; but always managed to go scot free in view of his political clout. So, one day, accompanied by field staff I raided the area under illegal Bhang cultivation and destroyed the whole crop. In view of his high political connections, the very next day the issue reached the higher political bosses including the then Chief Minister of the State; and a report in the matter was called for. However, when the position was explained, the delinquent was made to meet his commitment of supplying 125 quintals of paddy, which he did. Another challenge at Pahalgam was to manage Sundays, when there used to be big rush of tourists including students from various educational institutes. Often there were fights between individuals and sometimes between groups on varied issues. These situations had to be tackled very tactfully in order to

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maintain order in the town and considering the larger interests of tourism in the area."

iii. "My next posting was as Tehsildar Tangmarg - a famous health resort. Gulmarg another attractive and important tourist place of the Valley also formed part of this Tehsil. Hardly a few months after my joining at Tangmarg, one day it was told that horse suppliers, who provided horses on hire for riding by tourists at Gulmarg had gone on strike on certain minor issues and had resorted to block the main road. Within few hours I reached the site and heard the striking horse owners. They were assured that their genuine problems would be taken up with concerned authorities and got sorted out within reasonable time frame, but they did not budge. Finding the situation going out of control, main leaders of the striking horse owners were called for talks at a nearby place. They were told in clear terms that in case, despite the assurance, the strike was not called off, steps might be taken to stop all movement there; no intending tourist bound for Gulmarg would be allowed to move beyond Tangmarg till the issues were sorted out. The trick, commonly known in Revenue terminology as 'Hikmat-Amli' worked and they agreed to persuade others as well. This way the strike was called off immediately without resorting to any coercive action what so ever."

iv. "Another event concerning Tangmarg Tehsil pertains to Ferozpora Nallah. It carries huge bulk of water and, in fact, is the source for as many as seven Kuhals (Zamindara irrigation channels) covering major part of the cultivable land in the Tehsil. Almost every irrigation season there would be frequent disputes among zamindars of various villages; sometimes there would be severe fights over respective share of water involving thousands of people. During the period of my posting also a dispute arose over distribution of water from the source. On spot visit it revealed that different groups of people were in a quite hostile mood. First, they were made to calm down, and then every group was asked to nominate 4-5 persons, who would participate in a meeting to find out an amicable solution to the problem. Thereafter, a make shift place for sitting together in a nearby location was arranged and a meeting of all the representatives was held. They were made to understand that no one was above law and distribution of water from the Nallah would be regulated strictly as per shares and norms provided for in 'Riwaj-e-Abpashi'- a constituent of Wajib-ul-Arz. All of the participants agreed in one voice to the proposition subject to a caveat that a mechanism for strict monitoring of distribution needed to be put in place. Accordingly, after taking into confidence the senior functionaries of the District administration, it was decided that for whole of the summer

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season a Police Picket would remain stationed on spot and they would keep strict vigil in the matter in association with representatives of people nominated by all the warring groups to be available on spot on rotation basis. This way the situation, which if not handled timely and properly, could have taken a bad turn, was sorted out peacefully."

Before constitution of Shri Amar Nath Shrine Board with Hon'ble Governor of the State as its Chairman, the District Administration of Anantnag used to take care of all the arrangements connected with annual Shri Amar Nath pilgrimage with the Deputy Commissioner as the designated 'Yatra Officer'. During the years 1989 and 1990, in view of his other important engagements elsewhere the incumbent Deputy Commissioner expressed inability to handle the responsibilities as 'Yara Officer'. As such, Shri Mumtaz Afzal, who was then posted as Assistant Commissioner (G) Anantnag, having varied experience as Revenue Officer including working experience as Tehsildar Pahalgam and Tangmarg, was entrusted with the additional functions of 'Yatra Officer', Shri Amar Nath pilgrimage. Despite the fact that during both these years militancy was at its peak; Mumtaz Afzal managed the affairs quite professionally as a result of which yatra passed peacefully, for which he received appreciation from all the quarters.

It was during this very period that, with a view to understand intricacies as also passing the prescribed departmental examination he not only studied but mastered various Revenue Laws, Regulations and procedures. The fact of his mastery over Revenue Laws, Regulations and procedures, particularly among Revenue Officers of the Valley, gets certified by the high opinion often expressed by various senior officers under whom he had worked during that period. Besides, it was his in-depth knowledge about the working of Revenue Department, hard work, dedication and capability of getting things done under difficult situations in particular (a trait found especially in Revenue Officers), which always helped him in shouldering higher responsibilities such as Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and finally the Revenue Secretary quite successfully. Observations made by Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria at pages 231 - 232 of his book titled "The Men Who Served Jammu And Kashmir", appear quite apt in this context and are reproduced hereunder;

Pages: 231-32. *"After his induction in the Kashmir Administrative Service (K.A.S.) he worked in a variety of assignments. Along the way he acquired sound knowledge about administrative matters and had the good fortune of learning from some of the finest officers of the State. In 1989 Mumtaz Afzal was posted as Assistant Commissioner Anantnag and impressed his senior officers with his hard work, dedication and capability of getting*

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things done under difficult circumstances. This was the period when militancy had already started spreading in the Valley and the civil administration was slowly getting paralysed in Kashmir due to violent activities and frequent calls for bandhs. South Kashmir particularly Anantnag town, was also badly affected by these activities and in Anantnag separatist sentiments were inflamed by the actions of Qazi Nisar, who had styled himself as Mirwaiz of South Kashmir. The day today administration and law and order situation had deteriorated so much that by the beginning of February 1990, a Special Commissioner and Special DIG were posted in Anantnag to look after the affairs of two southern Districts of Anantnag and Pulwama. Mumtaz soon won their confidence and admiration by his adroit handling of tricky situations and in turn learnt a lot from these very fine officers. It was his performance here that brought him to the notice of the Chief Secretary as an officer who could handle greater responsibilities.

"In June 1992, while the state Government was finding it difficult to properly administer the volatile District of Badgam, in the Valley, Mumtaz Afzal was specially selected to be the Deputy Commissioner there. Under his stewardship development activities picked up in the area and the law and order scenario also improved perceptibly. He was able to strike a healthy balance between civil administration, armed forces and local population, including the opinion leaders. Badgam town has a predominant Shia population and for the last few years the sacred religious procession of this community, on the occasion of Moharrum, was not allowed to be taken out due to disturbed conditions. During his tenure the Moharrum procession was permitted and taken out peacefully, which was widely appreciated and earned him well deserved praise. But his most significant test as the DC came when Badgam was chosen as the first District to hold the development review meeting on April 8, 1993. Such events were rare in Kashmir those days and this became more important for him as Governor of the State, General Krishana Rao (Retd) and the Chief Secretary, Sheikh Ghulam Rasool also decided to participate. To make matters worse, the entire Valley was observing complete shutdown that day. In spite of difficult situations this conference was held successfully, in which district officers were in full attendance and the proceedings took place to the entire satisfaction of the two dignitaries. For good reason Badgam was considered to be a very well administered District during his tenure."

In addition to the various prestigious postings in Revenue Department held by Mumtaz Afzal, as detailed in previous pages, he was also posted on some other crucial assignments such as, Administrative Officer SKIMS, Private Secretary to Minister Food Supplies and Transport,

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Director Food and Supplies Department Kashmir, M.D. Backward Classes Commission, Senior Regional Manager, Food Corporation of India for J & K, for a long period of five years and three months, Director Rural Development Department Kashmir, Registrar Co-operative Societies J & K, Secretary Agriculture Department and finally the Commissioner cum Secretary Revenue, wherefrom he retired on superannuation on 31st of March 2005. It may be in place to add that in those disturbed times., it was not an easy task to handle management of trouble ridden Food and Suppiies Department, but because of the experience gained by him (HIkmat-Amli in particular) while serving in Revenue Department, Mumtaz was successful in streamlining the working to the entire satisfaction of his superiors. Similarly, he was the first officer from the J & K State as also the first Revenue Officer to be taken on deputation to (FCI) Food Corporation of India - another tough but prestigious assignment. During this journey of service career, in recognition of his excellent achievements, Mumtaz Afzal was conferred with President's Bronze Medal for his performance in the conduct of Census 1981, while he was posted as Tehsildar Pahalgam. He was inducted into I.A.S. with 1988 as the year of allotment and promoted to Super Time Scale of I.A.S. (Commissioner cadre) in the year 2004. Again, in the month of July 2006 when the Government of Jammu and Kashmir ordered a major re-organisation of administrative units by creating 8 new Districts, 3 new Sub-divisions and 12 new Tehsils in addition to the existing administrative units, a 'Demarcation Committee', headed by Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria as its Chairman, was constituted to demarcate geographical boundaries of these newly added units. Shri Mumtaz Afzal and author of the book were among six Members of the Committee, besides the two Divisional Commissioners as ex-officio Members. After submission of the report of the Committee well within prescribed time limit, the Committee was revived with a changed nomenclature i.e. 'Committee for Examination of Demands for new administrative Units', with a mandate to examine and recommend creation of more administrative units.

Mumtaz often expresses his gratitude towards some of the senior officers in Revenue Department namely, Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, Kotwal Dina Nath, Hamid Ullah Khan and S. A. Qayum whom he considers as his Mentors.

Again, it would be appropriate to make a mention that after taking over reins of the coalition Government of PDP and Congress, headed by late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, one of the slated priorities of the Government was to make concerted efforts to expedite the work on Udhampur - Baramulla rail link. Although Railways authorities themselves were keen enough to achieve visible progress on ground, but they had

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expressed their inability to move ahead in view of dismal progress on account of land acquisition for the project. In one of the meetings on the subject, Chief Administrative Officer in charge of the prestigious project voiced the impediment to the then Chief Secretary (Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria). Therefore, after considering the whole problem in detail, the Chief Secretary decided to assign the task to Mumtaz Afzal; which challenge when thrown was gladly accepted by the latter. This way, in the backdrop of having earned good reputation of being a competent Revenue Officer, Mumtaz Afzal was not only entrusted with a crucial assignment at the critical juncture of time, but quite proudly and to the entire satisfaction of concerned higher authorities, he also accomplished the job within scheduled time frame. The view is further strengthened by the observations as recorded by Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria the then Chief Secretary at page 234-35 of his book, earlier too cited; as reproduced below: -

Page: 234-35. *"He had picked up the gauntlet by accepting the most complicated and hard assignment of his career. The Chief Minister, when briefed, was happy with the choice of the CS and after the Cabinet Meeting two days later the State Government had a new Revenue Secretary."*

Once again, in the said book Dr Bloeria has specifically appreciated the role played by Shri Mumtaz Afzal in accomplishing the process of acquisition of land coming under the 117 kilometres long stretch of Qazigund - Baramullah Railway project, in his capacity as the then Revenue Secretary. For ready reference excerpts from the said book (pages: 230-31, 237 & 237-38) are reproduced as follows:-

Pages: 230-31. *"But the problem of land acquisition here was more acute than anywhere else, as most of the proposed alignment passed through paddy fields and orchards. It is indeed a hugely creditable achievement that the entire stretch of lands was acquired and handed over to the Railways within three years, making it possible to run trains in the Valley in October 2008. The man most responsible for this amazing feat, Mumtaz Afzal IAS (JK: 1988), who spearheaded the land acquisition efforts as Revenue Secretary of the State Government, was not amongst the jubilant invitees. He had retired from service in March 2005. The excellent work done by him and his officers would remain a legacy for a long time. This effort was also a crowning glory to his eventful career in the civil services, particularly so after the onset of militancy in the State from 1989 onwards.*

Page: 237. *"Surely, the field staff of Revenue department, the Collectors and respective Deputy Commissioners needed be praised for their untiring and dedicated work. The two Divisional Commissioners, first Parvez Dewan and then Khursheed Ganai, also gave their whole-hearted support to this endeavour and stepped in effectively to remove difficulties at the*

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field level. However, the main inspiration and drive behind all this collective effort was the single-minded pursuit of Mumtaz to hand over the Valley section of land to the Railways within the stipulated time."

Pages: 237-38. *"Over ninety percent land of the proposed track stood handed over to the Railways and the rest was in advance stages of acquisition. In a time when acquiring much smaller pieces of land for projects is becoming contentious and difficult proposition, to successfully complete the land acquisition process of over a hundred kilometers of train track, in little over two years and that too under conditions of militancy, is indeed a very remarkable achievement. It would be difficult to find a parallel anywhere else in the whole country ..... Today this connectivity is providing immense benefit to the people of the Valley and is a source of great convenience and joy to the passengers. Till this section is connected with the Sothern end at Katra and through that with rest of the country, this railway line would remain a living dream for the people. A dream in whose realisation Mumtaz Afzal played a significant role. This last assignment of his career was also truly his best."*

What the fine worded tributes to Mumtaz Afzal from an excellent personality like Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria - one among very few senior officers who care to appreciate work done by their subordinates?

On the basis of narrative in earlier pages, one can easily conclude that Shri Mumtaz Afzal has successfully played his inning well. From his childhood stage he had a strong wish to become a Revenue Officer, which he not only achieved but managed to create a space for himself in Revenue Department, many others would not dream of the same despite strong desires and efforts.



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OMKAR NATH KOUL

Omkar Nath Koul is one among the 2nd batch (year1959-60) trainees of Patwar Training Institute Kashmir-Srinagar, and also a trainee of the first and the last batch (year 1961) in Consolidation of Holdings from Consolidation Training Institute Bilari (Moradabad) U.P., as Consolidator (Giradwar Consolidation). Incidentally, author of the book is also a co-trainee of Omkar Nath in Bilari. Born on 26-09-1939 in the family of late Shri Gopi Nat Koul, father and late Smt. Meenawati mother, Omkar Nath belongs to village Barrah of old Tehsil Anantnag (Kashmir). In the wake of migration of K.P.s from valley in the year 1990, his family also shifted to Jammu and after construction of a small house in Kabeer colony of Talab Tiloo area Jammu, he is now putting up there with his family. His father was working in erstwhile Maharaja's Army in clerical cadre, and in that connection, he had also remained posted in Satwari Cantonment Jammu. So, Omkar Nath had his initial education i.e.1st to 3rd primary from Cantonment School Satwari. Thereafter he received education from a School in Kashmir, and after passing his Matriculation he got admission in Government College Ananatnag. At that point of time the College had two classes only i.e. 1st year and 2nd year of F.A.

By the time Omkar Nath left the College after passing his F.A., his father had retired from Army service. Having served in Army for a long time he certainly had developed some attachment with the establishment and as such, he had a strong desire that his son Omkar Nath should also be a part of it. So, one day he took Omkar Nath along and approached the Army Recruiting Officer for recruitment of his son. The Army Recruiting Officer, put Omkar Nath to various tests constantly for two days and finally selected him in the cadre of J. C. O. After announcing selection, the Army Recruiting Officer drew attention of Omkar Nath towards a map of India hanging in front of him and showed on map the location of Kashmir at the top, and Bombay (now Mumbai) by the side of sea, at bottom of the map where he was supposed to immediately proceed for training. Mere idea of going to such a far of place for training at the tender age of hardly twenty years had a very depressing impact on Omkar Nath, and he sought permission from the Recruiting Officer for

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two days to seek blessings from his mother; the permission was granted. After coming out from the room of Recruiting Officer, in the grip of fear, Omkar Nath instead of going to his home straight away went to the house of his maternal uncle located in another village; forsaking the idea of joining Army forever. It was after a quite some time when his father came to know about the mischief Omkar Nath had played. However, ignoring the misdeed of an ignorant lad, he brought Omkar Nath back to home.

After few months of the episode narrated in the above paragraph, there appeared an advertisement for recruitment of Patwari trainees in Revenue Department. Omkar Nath applied for same, and in due course of time was called for interview. Shri R. C. Raina - one of the stalwarts of Revenue Department of those times - then Settlement Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir conducted interview at Anantnag for candidates of that District. When Omkar Nath appeared on his turn for the interview, besides other questions, Shri Raina asked Omkar Nath to write down a line in Urdu dictated by him as, "Mustgeece Ne Istgassa Daayr Kiya. Naqabal Raftar Hone Ki Wajah Se Dakhil Dafter Hua." Although it was a difficult dictation, yet Omkar Nath attempted the same, which was found to be very near correct, so he was declared to be selected on the spot. On the appointed date he joined the Training Institute at Srinagar, received training for full one year, which included theory and practical training in the field, besides attachment with a Patwari for a few months. The training was followed by an examination conducted by the Financial Commissioner, which Omkar Nath cleared with good percentage of marks.

He was appointed as Patwari in the year 1960 in Tehsil Kulgam of old District Anantnag. Hardly had he a service of around six months, when he was nominated for undergoing training in Consolidation of Holdings, and after successful completion of six month training he was appointed as Consolidator (Girdawar Consolidation) in Tehsil Sonawari. However, after closure of the Consolidation work in the State, Omkar Nath came to be adjusted as Girdawar in District Anantnag. After having passed prescribed departmental examinations, he was promoted as Naib Tehsildar and then as Tehsildar. In the cadre of Tehsildar, he has got the distinction of having served as Settlement Tehsildar Anantnag of Kashmir Division and Ramban of Jammu Division for a period of more than nine years at a stretch. Finally, he was adjusted in Migrants' Relief Organisation and retired on superannuation there from on 31st of September 1997 as Deputy Commissioner (Vigilance).

Omkar Nath has shared few events of his service career as under:

i. His first assignment in Consolidation of Holdings wing was

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Consolidator (Girdawar Consolidation) in Tehsil Sonawari. Among others, village Saddarkote Bala was part of the area under his charge. He feels proud in saying that the Consolidation of Holdings in the said village, with an area of more than ten thousand Kanals of land, was completed as the first village most successfully. Almost every tenure holder was quite satisfied. However, one tenure holder, who wanted undue favour in getting his plot at a place not otherwise eligible, approached the then Director Consolidation of Holdings in his office with an application stating therein that Omkar Nath had taken a bribe of Rs 50/- from him, but did not do the desired work. One fine morning, when Omkar Nath was busy in his official work connected with preparation of final records of said village, Director Consolidation of Holdings arrived on spot on a surprise visit. Omkar Nath quickly made arrangement for sitting of the visiting officer. In presence of a number of tenure holders who were already present there, the Director disclosed the contents of the complaint and added that he had come to enquire about the same. He sought oral reply from Omkar Nath about the allegations made in the application, in response to which Omkar Nath wanted to know if the complainant had any witness to support his allegation. On asking by the Director, the complainant named one Ghulam Mohamad, who incidentally was very much present there. When questioned, he offered his statement to be recorded; in which he deposed that the complainant was a dishonest person and a habitual liar; he termed the complaint totally as a bundle of lies. The witness also deposed that neither the complainant had given any money to Omkar Nath nor had he ever demanded from anybody. He further added that Omkar Nath had done his job quite diligently and efficiently to the entire satisfaction of tenure holders. He even went to the extent that the complainant who was a Moulvi of the village Mosque; on account of his blatant lie, he would be divested of the honour. On hearing all this, Director Consolidation of Holdings expressed his annoyance to the complainant and rejected the complaint on spot.

ii. While he was posted as Girdawar Circle Achhabal in Tehsil Ananatnag, a Patwari had wrongfully made a change in respect of cultivation of a land in Register Girdawari. Thereafter the Patwari had been transferred to another Tehsil. Later when the matter came to the knowledge of the landholder, he approached the Tehsildar with an application pointing out the wrongful action of the Patwari. During conduct of enquiry, the Tehsildar called delinquent Patwari from Tehsil where he was posted, and when his guilt was established, strict action including immediate suspension from service was proposed to be initiated against him, besides ordering correction of the entry. The enquiry was completed within a period of a fortnight, and the prompt

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remedial measure as also strict action against the delinquent Patwari did sent a very positive signal in favour of authorities in Revenue Department.

iii. Again, while he was still posted as Girdawar Circle Achhabal in Tehsil Ananatnag, once during checking of Girdawari in a village, Omkakr Nath noticed that the Patwari Halqa, in violation of standing instructions, had wrongfully made an entry over a 'Khat Chaleepa'. Although he did admonish the Patwari, but omitted to make mention of the same, while recording his other observations in register 'Fard Partal'. After a gap of a week's time or so Director Land Records (Those days there used to be one Director Land Records for whole of the State) paid visit to that Tehsil, and during inspection of Revenue records, the very omission on the part of Omkar Nath was detected by the Director Land Records. Consequently, Omkar Nath was asked to explain, and in response he admitted his fault as also sought apology for the same. In view of recommendation from his immediate superior officers to the affect that Omkar Nath has got an overall image of being a competent and conscientious worker, who was popular among Zamindars, he was excused with stern oral warning in presence of the whole staff and officers. But the Inspection Note issued by the Director Land Records did contain a mention of whole episode including the part of omission on the part of Omkar Nath in not reflecting the wrong done by Patwari, in Fard Partal; copy of which was circulated among all the Revenue Officers of the State. Shri Onkar Nath did not hesitate in admitting even today that the incident acted as a strong deterrent, rather proved as a path breaker for his upright attitude towards strictly following rules and regulations throughout his future professional career.

iv. After 1947 writing up of Jamabandis on periodical basis did get disturbed. There were cases; rather there are still examples of Jamabandis of certain villages not to have been written for decades together. During the period of early sixties of the past century, the Revenue Department had taken up the task of clearing the backlog as a big challenge. In respect of Kashmir Division Omkar Nath has expressed his experience in the following words;

"Shri S.A.S. Qadiri was the Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir Division those days. In order to ensure achievement of the fixed targets, it was ordered that the work shall be undertaken while organising Girdawar Circle-wise camps. Besides, it was ordered that every week Girdawars and Patwaris would, on rotation basis, attend the Divisional Commissioner's office to show the progress achieved in that context. The Divisional Commissioner used to personally check the work done by each Patwari; which resulted in speedy accomplishment of the desired goals to a large extent"

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According to Omkar Nath, now a day's such type of work culture is missing resulting all around slackness. Further, he is of the view that in the first instance field workers lack basic working skill, and if at all they have the knowledge, the supervisory officials do not take the work seriously. This way, on the one hand the work in general as also preparation of Revenue Records is suffering; and on the other hand, prestige of the Department is getting lowered in the eyes of common men.

While discussing about traditions of the Revenue Department, Omkar Nath had often expressed that administrative knack and traditional values, for which the Revenue Department used to be known in the past, have of late found in wanting. Going a bit in detail, he is of the view that in old times every Patwari used to be available in his Patwar Halqa for major period of the time. In case of any problem to a Zamindar or any issue related to Revenue Record, the same would be attended to and sorted out by the Patwari on spot with ease as well as with a smiling face. As regards senior officers they would visit every Parwar Halqua from time to time, and besides taking up and deciding issues concerning Zamindars in open public durbar, would also conduct checking of work done by Patwaris. Observations, if any, would be recorded in register 'Fard Partal', which the Patwari was bound to comply and record certificate of compliance against each observation. Such a system of work was prevalent in Revenue Department from good old days; which not only worked well, but also had an effect of solid administrative grip of the Department over the field staff as well as the public. According to Omkar Nath, in present times the system detailed above is almost nonexistent, and that is the major cause of increase in litigation and pressure of more and unnecessary work in the offices of Revenue officers of various levels. Therefore, Omkar Nath suggests that certainly there is immediate need of taking appropriate steps by the authorities at helm of affairs to improve upon the situation, lest it may be too late to handle public wrath.

In the context of impressions and impacts upon him from old and experienced officers, Omkar Nath once proudly cited the name of one Jalal-ud-Din who, those days, was posted as Tehsildar Anantnag (Kashmir). According to him, Shri Jalal-ud-Din was the first officer who taught him the art of attestation of mutations; he would first explain about the types or kinds of mutations, teach how to record existing as also the prospective entries in the mutation register, and then advise what should be the language of the order. Omkar Nath gives full credit to Shri Jalal-ud-Din for having attained 'Maharat' (expertise) in writing mutation orders of all the categories.

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In the same vein he recalls administrative qualities of Shri Mohamd Akbar Khan, who was those days posted as Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, while Omkar Nath was a Girdawar in the old Tehsil of Anantnag. According to him, the Deputy Commissioner, would often conduct meeting with subordinate staff at Tehsil level. He would invariably ask if anybody had got any difficulty in performing his duties. In this context, Omkar Nath referred to an instance, in his own words, as follows;

"There was one Patwari working under me, who was very casual and careless in performing even his routine duties. I put up the complaint about the said official to the Deputy Commissioner, who advised me to conduct detailed checking of Revenue records of the Patwari, note down all discrepancies and shortfalls and record in register 'Fard Partal'. He further advised to send one copy of the 'Fard Partal' to him. Accordingly, one day I paid a visit to the particular Patwar Halqa, checked Revenue records in detail and recorded all shortcomings in register 'Fard Partal'. As advised by the Deputy Commissioner, a copy of 'Fard Partal' was sent to him. Immediately on receipt of copy of 'Fard Partal' the Deputy Commissioner issued order for attachment of the Patwari to Tehsil office, and served him with a show cause notice as to why action may not be initiated against him for dereliction of duties as pointed out by the Girdawar during his inspection. Hardly ten days had passed when the Patwari came to me and promised to perform his duties very promptly and efficiently in future, and requested to persuade the Deputy Commissioner not to take any adverse action. Very reluctantly I approached the Deputy Commissioner and explained him the whole scenario. Initially the later did not agree to let the Patwari off. However, on my further pleadings the Deputy Commissioner called the Patwari in his Office chamber, sought an apology from him for in-action on his part, on stamp paper, besides a written assurance to complete the Revenue records within a period of one week, and not to repeat similar dereliction of duty in future. On filing required assurances only, the Patwari was let off. This stern action on the part of the Deputy Commissioner did sent a strong message among other staff members, and in future I did not face any difficulty".

In respect of Shri Mohamd Akbar Khan, the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Omkar Nath also added that one day when the Deputy Commissioner entered his office, he noticed some (2-3) Patwaris sitting idle in the corridor. After sitting in his office chamber, he sent for the Patwaris through his peon and asked reasons for their visiting the office, but they failed to give any satisfactory reply. On this, the Deputy Commissioner immediately issued orders for placing them under suspension on account of their absence from their respective Patwar Halqas. Omkar Nath very much doubts any such action to be taken on the

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part of any Revenue Officer in present times. At the same time, he further adds that working at initial stage of his service career with officers, having such wonderful qualities, definitely had deep rooted impact on his person.

Since Omkar Nath besides having worked in main branch of Revenue Department, has also worked in two sister branches such as, Consolidation of Holdings and the Land Settlement, his views about the two revolutionary schemes, in his own word, are narrated as under: -

i. **Consolidation of Holdings:** It is a very good scheme, which is aimed at welfare of agricultural classes as also to boost the agro production. Under this scheme land of every tenure holder is tried to be consolidated at one or two places. But he feels that in the past, the scheme had to be closed due to inefficiency of the staff engaged at some places. According to him lack of knowledge of work is not the major factor; if one does not know work that does not matter much, but dedication and devotion to duty play a major role in such schemes, and if that is there one can take help from others as well. In fact, scheme like Consolidation of Holdings demands hard work at the level of basic workers and strict supervisory checking and controls, which Omkar Nath painfully feels, in present times, nobody is ready to do.

ii. **Land Settlement:** This again is an important branch of work assigned to Revenue Department. With the implementation of revolutionary laws like Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, Agrarian Reforms Act and horde of schemes concerning allotment of State and Evacuees lands etc. lot of changes have taken place thereby affecting record as well as map positions. Therefore, instead of routine up dating, taking up Land Settlement is very important. It is true that work in this direction is in process. Omkar Nath feels that at present although measurement is being done with the help of 'Total Station' and records are prepared with the help of Computers, it should have reduced the chances of mistakes; but there have been reports that extent of mistakes now is much more than those expected in traditional method. He attributes all this to lack of 'Team Spirit' among workers and supervisory staff as also non-involvement of land holders during the field work. He further adds that checking of measurement work and preparation of land records by the supervisory staff needs be undertaken strictly as per checking percentages prescribed for functionaries of all levels. Besides, at the time of final attestation of 'Record of Rights' at the level of Settlement Officer or Assistant Settlement Officer, entries should be read over in presence of maximum number of land holders, in order to see that chances of

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any mistake are minimised. Last but not the least, Omkar Nath has expressed the view that till such time, the field agency gets fully trained in handling 'Total Machine' and computers, the Settlement work needs be carried on by adopting traditional methods in vogue in the past.

In concluding the narrative in respect of Omkar Nath, his views about present day working of Revenue Department are summarised in following paragraph.

By and large, common men, particularly the rural masses, have dealings with Revenue officials from Ptwari to Tehsildar. Therefore, if the institutions of Patwari and Tehsildar work in a transparent and sympathetic manner; most of their problems would get sorted out and very few issues would go to higher authorities. But in order to ensure all this strict monitoring of the working at lower level by higher authorities is a pr-requisite. According to Omkar Nath, this important aspect has developed certain shortcomings, which lead to non-achievement of desired results. He further adds that in present times Revenue Officers as also the field staff get more involved in miscellaneous jobs than giving due attention to problems of the people related to Revenue records or their internal disputes concerning land. Similarly, very little time is devoted towards updating of records including conduct of periodical Girdawari, writing up and attestation of mutations etc. He further recalls that in the past, monthly meetings with officers and field staff used to be meant to fix targets, review progress achieved in respect of each official and each item of work, besides acting against officers or officials found lacking in accomplishing the targets. According to him such practices, somehow, have now become things of the past; as a result of which whether a person performs or does not perform, it does not matter. These days nobody is answerable to anybody.

In the wake of migration from Valley, Shri Omkar Nath has constructed a small house (comprising 2-3 rooms) in Kabeer Colony of Talab Tiloo area and putting up there with his small but a satisfied family. After retirement he took up the profession of practice in Revenue cases restricted to Revenue Courts only, and in view his vast experience in matters relating to Revenue Department, he is having good clientele. Although he is having some age-related minor health problems, yet he generally tries to be in his chamber (located in Jammu Deputy Commissioner's office complex) in time and almost daily.



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RAJINDER SINGH PARIHAR

Village Malhori is situate on Batote-Kishtwar National Highway and is almost midway on Bataote Bhaderwah road. It comprises a number of hamlets and is known for many sweet water springs spread over on both sides of the village. Residents have small land holdings but in view of the land being very fertile, the crop produced is sufficient for their survival. Earlier, before 1948, village Malhori was part of Tehsil and District Udhampur, whereas now it forms part of Thehsil and District Doda; so, it has a mixed culture. While people can speak Dogri as well as Hindi, but in general they speak in local language, in common parlance known as 'Khshali'.

Born to Th. Agya Ram father and Smt. Subhadra Devi mother on 2nd March 1938 in this village Malhori, Rajinder Singh Parihar grew up in the affectionate lap of the parents. His father an alumnus of Prince of Wales College, now G.G.M. Science College Jammu, was a Teacher in Government School there. He was a soft spoken and popular figure in his locality, and was known for his qualities of head and heart; in particular his strict attitude towards discipline. Recalling his child hood, Rajinder Singh emphasises that it was his father who tailored his child hood life. Besides guiding him in every sphere of life, he was his friend, guru and guide. He kept advising him on all matters till he was alive. He always said, example is better than precedence. Referring to one such incident he recalls that once during his Basic School time, his father, as Head Master of the School advised the Children, after the prayers, not to smoke. On their way back to home, Parihar asked his father that while he himself smokes, how would he reply to any student if asked, why does he smoke? On reaching home the father took up his Hooka, broke it on a nearby stone and said that is the reply to his son's question. Rajinder never saw his father smoking thereafter. On his appointment as Naib Tehsildar, his father advised him to work with honesty and dedication and that he would never like to listen any one saying, "here is a thief". That had a long-standing impact on his life.

Shri Parihar recollects that once, when his father was posted at

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Government Basic School Batote, the then Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir State, late Shri Hari Singh, passed through the School on way to Srinagar. Along with other students of the School he was also standing on road in the queue to welcome the Maharaja, who alighted from his car to meet the lined-up students, and when he passed by Mr Parihar, the Maharaja patted on his cheek and handed him over an envelope, which when later opened contained Rupees 35. That was the first blessing to him from such a high dignitary. His Highness also gave an envelope containing money to his father for distribution of sweets among other students and staff. A grand dinner was later arranged with that money. He further remembers that during their stay at Batote in connection with posting of his father, he had the occasions to see, great personalities like, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohamed Ali Jinah and Acharya Kriplani.

Wherever his father was posted, being a Teacher himself, he would carry Rajinder to the School holding by the finger. Therefore, he had his early schooling in various Schools of District Doda. After passing his Matriculation examination from Government High School Doda, he graduated from Government Gandhi Memorial College Jammu, as a resident student and thereafter completed M.A. (Economics) & LL. B degrees from Aligarh Muslim University in the year 1959.

With a brilliant academic background, he did try his luck with Civil Services Examination (I.A.S.), which was not to be, but had not to undergo the pangs of un-employment. In the month of September 1959, on his return from Delhi after Civil Services examination, he got a communication from the Financial Commissioner of Jammu and Kashmir Government stating that his name had been approved by the Government as Naib Tehsildar candidate and that he should hold himself in readiness for undergoing Revenue Training till next intimation; which somehow, he did not get. However, he was also little reluctant till, the then Deputy commissioner Doda, Agha Iftkhar called his father and told him that the said training had already started and advised that his son should not miss the opportunity. Accordingly, he came to Jammu and went to the Revenue Training Institute. There he had to encounter the first and the last difficulty of his career. He was told that he could not be admitted as the Financial Commissioner had suspended the training. After two/three days, the training re started but he was refused admission saying that the Financial Commissioner has directed not to admit him. In order to seek guidance, he called on Sh Chuni Lal Kotwal, then Minister representing Bhaderwah area, who rang up the Revenue Minister. The latter called him to his chamber with an application which Rajinder did. The Revenue Minister wrote on his application, "His name is

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on the approved list, he may be admitted for training" and directed him to go to the Superintendent Revenue Training Institute and tell him that Revenue Minister desires it. On presenting the application with endorsement of the Revenue Minister, the Superintendent who was visibly disturbed and told Parihar, "you have created trouble for me. I cannot comply with the desire of the Revenue Minister in presence of written orders of the Financial Commissioner to the contrary. He will ruin my career". In a huff the Superintendent took Parihar to Revenue Minister's office - which was not far away - but the Minister was not available. He then took him to the Revenue Secretary for advice and orders. The Revenue Secretary, after hearing the whole story washed his hands off, and said that in the circumstances he could not help and advised to give up the idea of joining altogether; because no one could continue in the Department at the annoyance of the Financial Commissioner and that rest is for the Superintendant to decide. They left disappointed and came back to the Revenue Training Institute. There, one of the Instructors remarked, "There is no room for you; so better leave". The Superintendant a thorough gentleman, advised Parihar not to approach any one and give up the idea of joining. A little perturbed he left the Training Institute not knowing what to do next. While coming down the stairs of the building it just stuck him why not meet the Financial Commissioner. So, he went to the Financial Commissioner's office located in the interior of Mubarak Mandi complex itself. (Those old days, Civil Secretariat functioned from Mubark Mandi Complex; till new Secretariat building was built in the year, 1962.) On seeking his permission, the Financial Commissioner, Shri M. M. Sidiqi called Rajinder Singh in and on his entering the room the Financial Commissioner remarked, "Oh you have come, come on take your seat". On his taking the seat the Financial Commissioner, straight away asked, "What brings you here"? And he narrated the whole matter to him verbatim. After some questions, the Financial Commissioner paused a little, took out a sheet of paper and pen and asked Parihar to write an application detailing the facts which he did. Shri Sidiqi took the application and wrote thereon, "If he is the only candidate left he should be admitted for training from 30th November 1959", and marked to the Superintendent Revenue Training Institute. While wishing Rajinder well he asked him to go to the Revenue Training Institute and work hard. To his astonishment the Superintendent had followed him and was waiting down stairs the office of the Financial Commissioner. Rajinder Singh gave the application to the Superintendent Revenue Training Institute who, after reading the endorsement on the application heaved a sigh of relief and said, "thank God, you have not brought wrath of the Financial Commissioner on me". After little dilly

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dallying he asked him to come to Bus Stand on 30th November 1959, from where he took him to Kanjwani (a place short of Bari Brahmana), where the field training was going on. He handed him over to the Instructor directing to take care of his training.

It would be appreciated that during those days, for want of formal recruitment rules and/or set norms, such problems, as faced by Shri Parihar, had to be faced by many. But at the same time, if properly represented the issues would be sorted out at the level of appropriate officers. Unlike present times, there was no practice of approaching Courts even for petty matters. Besides, the above narrative makes abundantly clear, how power full those days the Financial Commissioner, being Head of the Revenue Department used to be.

He successfully completed the field training with other candidates and reported back to the Training Institute, where after completion of the measurement record and compilation of other relevant registers they were sent to Tehsil Offices and Judicial Courts for practical training. In order to create a cadre of multipurpose officers and later deploy them for duty as per need, they were made to undergo training in Co-operative at Malangpora- Pulwama (Kashmir) and N.E.S. training in various Community Development Blocks within the State. During the course of field training in Blocks a communication from the Financial Commissioner was flashed to the trainees seeking their option to undergo further training in Consolidation of Holdings at Billari, Moradabad (U.P.), Weights and Measures in Bombay (now Mumbai) and Social Welfare at Neelokheri. He refused to give his option for undergoing any further training and requested his absorption in the Revenue Department, little knowing, at that time that Consolidation of Holdings was part of the Revenue Department. However, all the same he was selected for undergoing training in Consolidation of Holdings in a batch of three Tehsildars, twenty Naib Tehsildars and forty Consolidators (Girdawers) from the State. They underwent exhaustive six months training at Billari Training Institute, including field training at Bulandshehar (U.P.). (Billari is a small town near Moradabad of Uttar Pradesh, where a regular Consolidation Training Institute was run by the U.P. Government). After successful completion of the training, while officers belonging to Kashmir Division were asked to report to Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, those from Jammu Division reported to Deputy Commissioner Jammu. The date of joining the Deputy Commissioner's office was later taken as their date of first appointment and in his case, it was 28th of September 1961. After demarcation of Circle boundaries, after a few days, all of them were deputed to various Circles of Tehsil R. S. Pura, which was taken up for

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Consolidation of Holdings work initially from Jammu Division. Parihar was posted to Arnia Circle. Arnia is a town situate just on international border with Pakistan. Those days it was part of Tehsil R. S. Pura, later Tehsil Bishnah and now Arnia itself is a Tehsil of Jammu District. This is how his journey in the Revenue Department started.

Although, Parihar believes that there has been no better role model than his father, but luminaries like S/Shri R. K. Takkar, K. D. Sharma. Pt Permanand. Agha Iftkar Ahmed, Agha Muzaffar, P. N. Koul, Abdul Khaliq Malik, Ali Mohamad Butt, Th. Sehdev Singh, Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria, Ashok Kumar, Parvez Dewan, A. Sahasaranaman, Ms. Sushma Choudhary and last but not the least Ch. Bharat Bhushan are some of the personalities who contributed a lot in his career making. He, however, further recalls that on joining the service, parental encouragement received by him from his Financial Commissioners, S/Shri M. M. Sidiqi, Agha Nasir Ali and Rajkumar Shivdev Singh also cannot be lost sight of. According to him, learning is a process and he has learnt something from every one. Love and affection, he got from them and many others can't be described in limited space and time. However, he recollects a few instances as under;

i. R. K. Takkar once told him that one should not only be professionally honest, but intellectually honest too.

ii. Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria, as Divisional Commissioner Jammu once praised him,

"You have established your honesty to an extent that today if you ask Tehsildar R. S. Pura to send you some rice, he will simply not believe it whether you really mean it."

These instances indicate the degree of faith that an officer can repose in his worthy subordinates.

During one of our sitting, while recounting his association with Shri K. D. Sharma and Pt. Parmanad, he mentioned that they took care of social life also and always encouraged him. K. D. Sharma once, during a discussion on some official matter, praising his truthfulness and honesty smilingly said in Dogri, "Are you not going to tell a lie even today". He often seemed anxious to mention the respect and affection shown by Shri Parvez Dewan; who was posted as Deputy Commissioner Jammu, when Rajinder was his Additional Deputy Commissioner. Shri Dewan would often come up to his (Additional Deputy Commissioner's) room if he had to make any enquiry from him instead of calling him down to his room.

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Once in a meeting with Army in 10 Divisional Headquarter, he carried Parihar along and on an issue raised by the Army regarding illegal felling of trees, Mr Dewan remarked, "let us leave it to Mr Parihar to take care of the matter. We in the Department swear by his honesty".

What a fine recognition?

The greatest gift of his life was given by S/Shri Ashok Kumar the then Chief Secretary and Parvez Dewan the then Principal Secretary to the Governor by getting him placed in Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission as a Member, which not only enhanced his service, but considerably enhanced his emoluments. With the increased salary and retirement benefits he was able to meet his liabilities and construct a shelter. This last assignment was almost a heavenly blessing.

Once, when Shri Parihar was posted as Tehsildar Consolidation of Holdings Jammu, Shri Agha Muzaffar, the then Financial Commissioner visited Marh Niabat area for on the spot assessment of the working of the Consolidation of Holdings scheme. Agha Altaf the then Director Consolidation of Holdings and S. A. Qayum, the Settlement Officer Consolidation were also part of the visiting team. The Financial Commissioner was explained in detail the whole process involved in achieving the targeted goals envisaged under the Consolidation of Holdings Act, which included up-dating of Revenue records in the first stage followed by valuation of each field based on various factors including soil classification, crops sown, distance from village Abadi etc. and carvation of 'Chaks' in respect total holding of each right holder at one or two places. It was also informed that at every stage of work, village elders and members of Consolidation Committee were invariably involved and after every stage the records prepared are read out in open session to all the concerned. A few 'Chaks' were physically demarcated on ground and shown to the Financial Commissioner, who was so impressed by the work that he enquired from Rajinder Singh whether he was inducted in K.A.S. or not. When informed in the negative, he asked the Director and the Settlement Officer Consolidation that either of the two should call on him the next day to remind him of the matter. Next day when the Settlement Officer called on the Financial Commissioner, the latter informed that the name of officer already stands recommended to the Public Service Commission for their clearance and rest he would take care of. A few days later, when the Director Consolidation of Holdings called on the Revenue Minister, the latter enquired from him, "who is Rajinder Singh? The Financial Commissioner had spoken quite high of him and was very keen that he is inducted into K.A.S."

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And, when the list of officers inducted into K.A.S. was issued the name of Rajinder Parihar was very much there.

This once again shows that, in those old days, senior officers would take personal interest as to how they could be of help in encouraging their deserving subordinates and further goes to prove the existence of traditions in the Revenue Department, whereby officers like Parihar would get due recognition and fruitful rewards.

At one point of time, while he was posted as Naib Tehsildar Bhaderwah, he reminisces to have received his first encouragement to follow the path of honesty from Abdul Khalik Malik the then Deputy Commissioner Doda. Knowing well that if required Parihar would make arrangements, by spending money from his own pocket, without involving field staff or Zamindars, he advised him that he need not bother about the Deputy Commissioner's boarding and lodging during tour to his area.

Another personality who had a specific positive influence in his career and deserves a special mention was the dynamic officer of the State namely, Sayed Abdul Qayum from whom he claims to have learnt the secret of 'Team Work'. He as Settlement Officer Consolidation of Holdings, would always carry together all officers namely, Ganga Dutt Bhagat, Virender Kumar Gupta (then Naib Tehsildars Consolidation) and himself (Tehsildar Consolidation) in times of any type of crisis and all would sit together in order to sort out the problem including disputes that may arise in disposing of Appeals/Revision applications. The working style was very much appreciated by public as well as the officers in the Department and helped in reducing litigation concerning consolidation operations, in particular.

He would not hesitate in expressing his gratitude towards the affection shown to him by S/Shri Parmod Kumar Jain and K.B. Aggarwal I.A.S. officers. Shri Parvez Dewan the then Deputy Commissioner Jammu told him once that he was informed by the then Chief Secretary (Sh. Vijay Kapoor, I. A. S. Officer from U. P. cadre) that both the officers one after other refused to be posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu replacing Parihar. They did not want to dislodge him out of sheer respect.

Referring about events during his service career, he often says that events constitute the life. Out of many such incidents, only a few, as disclosed by Parihar Sahib, are being shared as under;

i. It was early nineteen sixties. Khwaja Sadar-ud-Din the then Revenue Secretary (another well reputed Revenue Officer of his times)

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had fixed a meeting of Revenue Officers of District Doda at Batote. There was a spot visit before the meeting and all officers who had come for the meeting accompanied the Revenue Secretary. Thereafter, while in meeting room before initiating the meeting formally, the Revenue Secretary asked one of the officers present in the meeting for his introduction. The officer told his name and the post he held. He was a Naib Tehsildar and was representing his Tehsildar. The Revenue Secretary then enquired from the officer, they have been around for about half an hour and probably have not met earlier, and shouldn't he have introduced himself? The officer replied that he had wished him at least twice during the spot visit. To which the Revenue Secretary said, during spot visit so many persons wished him, so should he presume all of them to be Naib Tehsildars or Revenue Officers? He was then asked if he had qualified the departmental examination or not? The officer replied in negative and added, what is the fun of qualifying the departmental examination, when promotions are ordered on the basis of the pull and pressure one had? Not always necessary was the reply from the Revenue Secretary, who also added that it must be noted that a person who does not have pulls and pressure, for him having qualified the departmental examination carries a significant weight for claiming promotion.

Thereafter, addressing Parihar the Revenue Secretary again put the question whether he had qualified the departmental examination or not? Finding reply in the negative, he advised him to do the same, at the earliest as in view of his reputation viz a viz honesty, intelligence and devotion towards duty he would wish him to be promoted as Tehsildar soon. Accordingly, on returning to head quarter he promptly initiated the process and qualified the prescribed examination in the very next session. The timely advice of the then Revenue Secretary proved as a boon for him in his service career.

This in turn shows as to how much concerned the senior officers, in those old days, used to be with regard to the welfare of their subordinates.

ii. It was probably the year 1964, when Parihar was posted as Naib Tehsildar Bhaderwah. He was directed by the then Deputy Commissioner Doda to immediately proceed to Bhalessa, as the area was under grip of a communal tension; and the incumbent Naib Tehsildar, shri Mehboob Shah - a very able and competent officer of high integrity, of those times, had to proceed on leave on health grounds. Those days Abdul Khaliq Malik, was the Deputy Commissioner and the District Doda comprised of the present time three Districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban, less by

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Tehsil Gool. Bhalessa, which at present is a Tehsil and Sub-division of District Doda; those old days it was a Niabat of Tehsil Bhaderwah. Parihar was supposed to join the Militia Contingent at Thathri commanded by a Major. Further happenings would be more appropriately summarised in his own words as under;

"Accordingly, I took along Rai Raj, the Wasalbaqi Nawis in Tehsil office Bhaderwah - an energetic as also a trustworthy worker, and left for Thathri. Militia Contingent had already moved by then. From Thathri onwards, after trekking a difficult terrain we reached Gandoh the next day. On reaching there, I immediately established contact with respectables of the locality to ascertain the ground reality, and it revealed that on the basis of certain minor misgiving, people from minority community from a few villages had migrated to other areas. The Army contingent was already stationed at Gandoh. Therefore, the Army Officer in charge, the S.H.O. and self visited vulnerable areas, contacted the people belonging to all shades of life, and as a first step towards wining confidence of the people; formed Peace Committees in the affected areas. With the help of the Peace Committees as also after discussions with all concerned, we were able to remove unfounded apprehensions from the minds of minority people. Thereafter, with the active involvement of people belonging to majority community, the few families who had migrated to other areas were persuaded as also facilitated to return back to their homes. The District Administration was kept informed of the daily situation through wireless net work; the only communication available those old days. I put my stay there for a period of week or so, and when it was felt that the situation had returned to normal, I decided to come back to Bhaderwah leaving the Militia Contingent at Gandoh for some time more. That being the extreme winter period, when I started my back journey, it had started snowing heavily. En-route, at places, it was waist deep snow and it took us three days to reach Bhaderwah.

"Hardly a period of month or so had passed, when I was transferred and posted as Naib Tehsildar Gandoh-Bhalessa. On receiving the information, initially I did get upset because of the hardships likely to be faced in the area. But as a part of my life long principles, I had never protested to any of my postings, how so ever un-comfortable that might be. So, I proceeded to new place of my posting braving the snow bound peaks, assumed my duties at Gandoh; and started functioning from the newly constructed Niabat building there. It will be of interest for the readers to know that till then functioning of the Sub-divisional Niabat was totally in disarray. While Niabat was functioning from village Bhatias, the Police Station was located, quite a distance apart, at village Kilhotran in

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rented buildings, despite full-fledged buildings of the Niabat and that of the Police Station having been made available at Gandoh; and the Block Development office was almost defunct. After my joining there as Naib Tehsildar, I not only occupied the newly constructed Niabat building, but after taking all concerned into confidence, got the staff as well as the records shifted to Gandoh. I also requested the Superintendent of Police Doda and got the Police Station shifted to Gandoh. At the same time, steps were taken to energise the working of Block Development office. All that could be possible, of course, with the blessings of the District Administration. Not only that, but all along my stay at Gandoh, I received unstinted support and patronage both from the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police Doda, which helped me in successfully tackling the law and order situations as and when these arose, especially the one that took place after the arrest of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. By then, the Deputy Commissioner Doda came to be replaced by K. D. Sharma, and the Militia was replaced by Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police."

iii. During that very period a grave situation had to be faced by the administration due to failure of crops in the area, and the people at large were at the verge of starvation. There were no stores in the area; even it was not possible for the people to get supplies from Thathri or Bhaderwah, as the only path from Bhaderwah to Bhalessa was covered with snow. The matter was taken up with the District Administration through wireless net work, the only mean of communication available at that time, and it was requested to rush supply of food grains from Bhaderwah to Gandoh. In order to facilitate the process, it was decided to set up a transit Store midway at village Kahra. The food crises had the affect of adding fuel to the fire in the already troubled law and order situation prevailing in the District, as there were large scale protests and demonstrations in the wake of arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Prohibitary orders under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code had already been in place throughout the District. In the meantime, people in the entire Niabat of Gandoh-Bhalessa had started taking out processions demanding immediate arrangements for availability of food grains. With a view to expedite the process, the Deputy Commissioner deputed the District Supply Officer to Kahra, where both Naib Tehsildar and the District Supply Officer established a control room, and with the good offices of the former, a building was hired to be used as the proposed transit Store. But the problem was, how to arrange transportation of the food grains, because of snow and non-existence of even smooth pedestrian path, particularly between Donadi (the last point up to which

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supply could be transported) to Kahra - the place selected for setting up a temporary Store. Parihar managed the situation quite efficiently and tactfully to be narrated in his own words as under;

"I hit upon a plan to make carriage of grains possible. With the help of field staff and the Police, I commanded that every able-bodied person in the area would work as a forced labour to clear snow and make way for ponies and mules. Within three to four days of the operation we were able to make path over frozen snow. I personally remained present there on all those days. That was definitely a gigantic task which can hardly be described in appropriate words. However, it must be admitted that I received full co-operation and appreciation from the people in general for the action. So much so that an old prominent person (Ex-Zaildar) of the area once said that it was second time during his (the old man's) life when that type of operation was carried. According to him (the old man), on an earlier occasion, when he was quite young a Naib Tehsildar from Bhaderwah on tour of Bhalessa area got stranded because of snow. So, the people cleared the passage, and carried the Naib Tehsildar and his dog in a Palki (Planquine); only the difference was that this time the operation was on a large scale besides being for public good and having been supervised by you. It will be in place to mention here that those old times the Gandoh - Bhalessa area formed part of Niabat as well as Tehsil Bhaderwa.

"After the path was found to be fit for movement, I further commanded that all horses and mules in the area would carry only ration from Bhaderwah Sore to Gandoh; and with a view to ensure strict compliance, even few defaulters were fined. This way, supplies started reaching Gandoh. Then I diverted my attention to Kahra - Thathri route i.e. to arrange supply from Thathri to Kahra. The supplies had to be carried through manual labourers. Again, with the involvement of field staff and the Police, I put able bodied people on the forced labour. After keeping constant day and night personal supervision for about a week, we could create a smooth pedestrian path from Kahra to Donadi. Thereafter, it was again directed that every household in the area, without any discrimination of high and low, shall bring eighty Kilograms of food grains (forty kilograms at a time) from Thathri Store on a permit to be issued from my camp office at Kahra; those who were not doing any labour themselves were directed to hire a labourer and do the need full. Very hard and strong measures were taken to enforce the dictate. We succeeded in our plan but, of course, that could be possible only because the whole exercise was for public good, non-discriminatory and un-biased. As a result, huge labour force started working and we were in a

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position to create sufficient stocks both at Kahra as also at Gandoh. Thereafter, with the help of all employees available in the area, the main task of distribution of the food grains in the whole region was taken up in hand, and this way the grave problem of food scarcity was overcome. District administration including the Tehsildar Bhaderwah was kept informed of the whole process on daily basis, and their blessings and full support were, of course, there in accomplishing this gigantic task."

iv. But the narrative would be in complete without mention of another incident connected with the event, as once recounted by Shri Parihar. During the course of supply of food grains from Thathri, the Store Keeper of the Food and Supplies Department (Now-a-days called as Consumers Affairs and Public Distribution Department) did not behave in the desired manner. He would often absent himself and, at times, refused to honour the permits issued by the authorised officials. That created an atmosphere of resentment among the already agitated public; even the labourers engaged on the job had come out on road in protest of the uncalled-for attitude of the official (the Store Keeper). In order to handle the situation, the Naib Tehsildar had to rush to Thathri. On reaching there, to his surprise, it revealed that the Store was locked and the Store Keeper missing; while the public was in an angry and agitating mood. The situation demanded prompt as also adequate steps in order to win over confidence of the people of the area. Accordingly, the Naib Tehsildar in presence of few respectables of the locality got the lock of the Store broke open, inventory of the available stock prepared and handed over the same to the next available official; the Store Keeper - a strong headed and arrogant employee of the Food and Supplies Department was ordered to be placed under suspension. Simultaneously, a message (through Police wireless communication) was flashed to the Deputy Commissioner Doda as also the Deputy Commissioner Food and Supplies Department Jammu, (Those old times Divisional head of the now a days'Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department was designated as Deputy Commissioner Food and Supplies Department and Pt. Yog Dhian was then holding the assignment in Jammu Division) detailing the circumstances and the action taken with a request to confirm the same, as that was decidedly much beyond competence of the Naib Tehsildar. According to Shri Parihar, although he was little apprehensive, yet to his amusement, not only the action was confirmed forthwith, but was very much appreciated. This way the supply of food grains resumed and situation eased. The administration succeeded not only in providing ration to the needy public, but a big labour force got engaged in transportation of food grains from Thathri to Gandoh; besides engagement of ponies for

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transportation from Bhaderwah to Gandoh. The ponies and the labourers thus engaged were paid wages at approved government rates, so a large section of people was engaged in gainful employment, which of course, proved of great help to them at that time of crisis.

v. Another important event that occurred during early service period of Parihar, which, he curiously wanted to share with Revenue Officers of contemporary times, also pertain to the period when he was posted as Naib Tesildar Gandoh-Balessa. According to him, on the law and order front situation had become tense, as in the aftermath of the arrest of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, many office bearers of Plebiscite Front were being detained under preventive laws. In the case of one such arrest he happened to be a personal witness, and as such, further course of events would be best narrated in his own words as follows;

"A local President of Plebiscite Front had been ordered to be detained at Sub-Jail Kathua. The local S.H.O., who was entrusted with responsibility of execution of the warrant, apprehending some trouble, requested me to be present there during the process of execution of the warrant. I refused to go, as normally that was not part my job; so the S.H.O. proceeded to village Kilhotran himself along with few unarmed constables. However, subsequently and fortunately, it dawned on me to go, apprehending aggravation of situation on spot. So, I took one Head Constable of the Armed Police along and left for village Kilhotran. When I reached there, the S.H.O. reported that he had identified the person to be detained, who was seriously ill and bed ridden. Since it was not possible to leave the warrant issued by the District Magistrate as un-executed; so, he was taken into custody, and we started way back to Gandoh. The news of detention spread like wild fire and protestors in thousands gathered in a Mosque nearby. As soon as we reached at some distance from the Mosque, the mob rushed towards the Police party with lathis and stones with an intention of snatching away the deteune. Among us, only the S.H.O. had the weapon, his service revolver with him. He, in a huff, took out the revolver and pointed out the same towards the mob asking them to stop, failing which he would open fire. I immediately rushed to the S.H.O., and pulled back his arm; thus, preventing the fire, and simultaneously shouted at the mob, at the top of my voice, asking them to stop and listen. With the grace of God, good sense prevailed on them and they responded positively; but they questioned the manner of detention. After prolonged parleys we persuaded the mob to disperse and brought the detenue to the Police Station.

"In the late evening the S.H.O. - an elderly person, came to me to

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say that he had offered Namaz and Zakat for forgiveness and thanked me for averting a disastrous situation. To be very frank, I too was very much perturbed and worried, because the detenue was seriously ill. After thinking over the matter and discussing with the S.H.O., I flashed a common message from self and S.H.O. to the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police Doda with a copy to the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, detailing the facts, and requested for release of the detenue on Parole. The District Magistrate immediately sought report on kind of disease and treatment being given. The District Magistrate had duplicated copy of his message to the Divisional Commissioner. I flashed back forth with about the ailment of the detenue, and informed that the kind of treatment that could be given at a place like Bhalessa, could be well imagined by the authorities. At the same time, I reiterated for release, and copy of the return message was again sent to the Divisional Commissioner as well. Soon thereafter, came a message from Shri T. C. A. Srinivasa Vardhan, the then Divisional Commissioner Jammu followed by a similar communication from the District Magistrate Doda sanctioning the Parole. It all happened within twenty-four hours that the detenue was released on Parole, and we heaved a sigh of great relief."

"My above actions had softening affects; the protests stopped and public at large bestowed their blessings on me. I had a comfortable time thereafter. The dictum "As you sow, so shall you reap" holds good here also. It was from here that I was promoted and posted as Tehsildar Balakote of Distric Poonch, yet another trying posting due to Indo-Pak war of 1965."

In sharing with the narrative of two important events as above, the purpose behind is to convey to young officers that they should not lack initiative or hesitate from taking decisions. Those were the formative years of service of Parihar, yet he did not lack initiative and at times took decisions which were decidedly beyond his competence. Nevertheless, his actions were not only confirmed forthwith, but appreciated as well. However, one should bear in mind that such action(s) is/are not guided by any extraneous considerations, ulterior motives and/or mala fide intentions. It should primarily be unbiased, in-discriminatory and not for self-aggrandizement; one should have public good upper-most in mind.

vi. In mid nineteen sixties, Rajinder Singh was posted as Tehsildar Mendhar. Mendhar is a town of Ponnch District situate just on LOC and often gets disturbed due border clashes. It also needs a mention that during those days right from Sunderbani up to Poonch it was one District

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called as Poonch-Rajouri District. Once, Khwaja Ali Mohamad Batt, the then Deputy Commissioner and Sayed Abdul Qayum the Assistant Commissioner, Poonch- Rajouri came to Mendhar with their Tiffin. He had also prepared some meals for the visiting officer, but they said, they won't take as they would not like to put a burden on him. Later, on persuasion they shared the meals on the understanding that as and when he would visit Poonch, he would stay with one of them and that on their visit to Mendhar no special arrangements for meals would be made.

Subsequent to that event, after a gap of around a month or so, the Deputy Commissioner Poonch again visited Mendhar, but without any pre-information. On his arrival, he expressed desire to visit residential quarter of the Tehsildar as he wanted to use the wash room. The moment he moved towards the quarter, Tehsildar gave some money to his orderly to bring some mutton to be given to his cook for cooking additional dish hurriedly. On the other hand, the Deputy Commissioner in the guise of his desire to use wash room straight way went to kitchen and just in a routine manner gathered information from the cook, as to what he had cooked?

After finishing official business when they assembled for lunch, the Deputy Commissioner finding two dishes on the dining table addressed the Tehsildar and pointed out that when only one dish was cooked in the kitchen, how come there were two on the table? He announced not to take the additional dish terming that as a "cheating and 'Haram" for him.

vii. Again, during his posting as Tehsildar Mendhar, once a group of around two hundered and fifty people belonging to other side of the State (POK), which included ladies and children, crossed over to our side. It was probably the first week of January 1966 so far as he remembers. The Army was taken un-aware by the coming of such a large number of civilians from across the LOC. The Army caught hold of and gathered them at the base camp with a view to deport them back to P.O.K. They took up the operation during night hours and during the process of deporting few people, reportedly, got killed. Next morning the issue was brought to his notice. He talked to the Army Officers concerned, who confirmed some deaths to have taken place in the process of deporting. Army Officers invited him to visit the base camp and inspect the dead bodies before their burial. He took the S.H.O. and Medical Officer along and went to the spot of occurrence. To his surprise he found few dead bodies lying here and there. The Army sought his permission to bury them, which he refused till post mortem of the dead bodies was done. Next morning, he supervised the conduct of post mortem by Medical Officer and his team,

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in presence of S.H.O. and few civilians. Thereafter, the dead bodies were buried after performing required religious rites in association with some civilians. Meanwhile, civilians from entire Tehsil had gathered in front of Tehsil Office shouting anti administration slogans. In spite of assurance from higher ups including Chief of Army Staff, Defence Minister and Officers of Home Ministry/State Government, the agitating people did not agree to lift the dharna. Later on, on an assurance by late Shri D.P. Dhar the then Home Minister of the State the dharna was lifted, when the people were told that Tehsildar Mendhar has apprised the authorities of the ground position and that a Committee, comprising Brigade Commander, S.A. Qayum the then Assistant Commissioner Poonch, Th. Surat Singh the then Additional Superintendent of Police Poonch and Tehsildar Mendhar was constituted to look into the entire episode and find out culprits, if any. After hectic enquiry and spot visits including mine infested areas, the Committee concluded its task and concluded that eleven Army personnel were found guilty of commission of different offences. The guilty were Court Martialed and suitably punished.

viii. Another event he recalls was that while he posted as Tehsildar Akhnoor (District Jammu) - a town situated on the right bank of Chenab river about twenty-eight kilometres from Jammu city, in the year 1974, he was deputed by the Divisional Administration to Kishanpur and Manwal Camps where, refugees from Chhamb sector encamping there, had gone on strike and for months together did not allow any civil officer to visit the camps. They had even started disrupting traffic on Dhar-Udhampur road and sometimes would stop Army convoy as well. He was asked to talk to the people and try to tackle the situation to bring normalcy. He visited the camps and with the grace of God, after talking to the Camp inmates, who in fact earlier belonged to his Tehsil Akhnoor, he was able to persuade the agitating D.Ps to lift the dharna. His work was appreciated by the Administration up to the level of Chief Secretary and that earned him promotion also.

ix. During the tenure of Shri R. K. Takkar (I.A.S.) as Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Rajinder Singh Parihar was posted as Officer on Special Duty with him. Those days Officer on Special Duty commonly known as O.S.D. (later re-designated as Assistant Commissioner Central) used to be the sole senior officer in the office of Divisional Commissioner, and there were no Additional Commissioners. It was disclosed by Parihar once that the day he joined his new assignment, the Divisional Commissioner very next morning called him in his room and enquired from him if he was comfortable with the new posting. On finding a reply in the affirmative, Shri Takkar observed;

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"Rajinder we have many things in common such as, we have similar names, we have almost identical date of birth, I am son of a teacher - you are son of a Teacher, you are from a village - I am also from a village, You are a Post Graduate - I am a Post Graduate, I am in the administrative service - you are in the administrative service, and now we are in a common office; so let us join our hands and work hard for bringing about improvements in the administration."

In this context, Parihar also expressed his gratitude towards shri Takkar in the following words;

"Shri Takkar always took personal care of my well being and he got me a house allotted which I occupied till my retirement."

What an excellent way of motivating a junior?

Besides motivation, the above narrative indicates that how senior officers used to be concerned and well informed of minute details about their juniors. They believed working in a family like atmosphere, which is generally found missing now a days.

At the same time, Shri Prihar did express his satisfaction to have enjoyed the most, his service in Civil Secretariat in various capacities in the General Administration Department, Housing and Urban Development Department and the most sensitive assignment as Additional Secretary in the Home Department, besides a long stint as Special Assistant to the Chief Secretary.

While recalling his past he once said that he does not know how all these years passed and how he accomplished his tasks. According to him, he never craved for anything. He never asked for his postings and promotions. He always believed in hard work and action as a firm believer in the theory of 'Karma'. Everything he got in life came automatically. He believes, nothing is in the hands of man. Everybody plays the assigned roll on this 'World Stage' as ordained. Nothing moves without 'His Will'. Rajinder has a firm belief that meditation is essential for the peace and tranquillity of mind. That is why; he spends most of his time in meditation, which gives him strength and solace, and that in line with his ideology of universal peace, he starts his morning and evening prayer as:

"Vigan Haran Mangal Karan Ganpati Dev-Sub Ko Sad Budhi Pardan Karo, Sad Marg Per Chalne Aur Sad Bhavna Ki Prerna Do Mere Ishwar. Sab ka Mangal Ho Kalyan Ho Aisi Kirpa Kijiye Sri Ganesh."

Post retirement activities

i. Having a professional degree in Law he is enrolled as an Advocate

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of Jammu and Kashmir High Court. He practiced for some time mostly in Jammu and Kashmir Special Tribunal. He started his practice with a view to encouraging his daughter Monika Parihar who is also enrolled as an Advocate. He did not continue for log as he was not happy with growing culture of frivolous litigation and long delays by adjourning cases for no substantial reasons. However, he continued to advise people from his home, who so ever approached him without charging any fee.

ii. The Governor Jammu and Kashmir, in his capacity as Chairman State Red Cross Society, appointed Parihar as Regional Secretary Red Cross Society, which offer he accepted with a spirit to help the needy. After observing working of the Society for some time, he did not feel comfortable as, according to him, the people associated with the Society were not there with missionary zeal to serve the suffering humanity; but mostly for gaining popularity. Therefore, going by the inner voice of his conscience, he resigned from the prestigious assignment, a post for which many others would be craving to be considered.

About the working of today's Revenue Officers, he opened up his mind in the following words;

"Revenue Officers of today are by and large intelligent; but most of them lack determination, dedication and hard work. Intelligence without due diligence is of no use. They are well paid but money in life is not everything and they need be made aware of it. They should understand that hard work never goes un-rewarded."

He therefore, quite forcefully suggests that regular trainings and refresher courses should be held not only for their skill development but for development of their mind as well. The senior officers should set examples for them and get work done by them. According to him taking over the responsibility by senior officers kills the initiative of young officers. So, a healthy balance of the two is important. The initiative and drive are essential elements of administration which the young officers must possess and exhibit. Further, with regard to steps to bring improvement in the functioning of the Department, he is of the view that;

"It is a well-established fact that Revenue Department is the back bone of the administration. It has, unfortunately, lost much of its pristine glory. In the Revenue administration, in my opinion, Financial Commissioner (Revenue) and the Patwari hold key positions. It may not be wrong to say that the authority of Financial Commissioner has eroded to a great extent over the period of time. Institution of the Financial

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Commissioner need be strengthened. Senior most officer next only to Chief Secretary used to be appointed as Financial Commissioner. He was not only respected by the Revenue Department functionaries, but was widely respected by entire civil administration. Today the situation is such that no senior officer is willing to be posted as Financial Commissioner (Revenue). Assistant Commissioner Revenue who was intended to be responsible for maintenance of Revenue records and the Revenue administration, as the nomenclature itself suggests, has failed to create the impact. The Additional Deputy Commissioners were also appointed in each District to look after Revenue Administration in the District, but this has also remained on papers and their contribution in strengthening the Revenue administration is almost zero. The nexus of the Patwaries and the politician has brought havoc to the Department. The implementation of Big Landed Estates Abolition Act; Agrarian Reforms Act, and vesting of ownership rights over the State lands under the 'Roshni Act, though well intended, has been very tardy and faulty. The disputes instead of being settled are continuing to exist till today multiplying the litigation. With the enactment of these laws we have destroyed the old revenue system and failed to create a new one. According to the 'saying' of a wise man, 'the land belonged to Zamindars but has been sold by the Revenue Department.' Much needs to be done to bring the Department out of chaos. The fear of administration is essential for healthy working which is missing today. Nobody is punished for the wrong doing. To state briefly the institutions mentioned above need be strengthened. There are very good laws. All that is needed is proper implementation thereof. Inspections by the senior officers should be restored. Training courses for the officers and field staff need be arranged frequently. The old system of writing fortnightly tour diaries by the Revenue Officers should be re-started. According to him, the biggest causality of the departmental apathy has been the Revenue records. The 'Girdawri' is not being conducted or is not being conducted in accordance with Standing Orders, there by defeating the very objective of conduct of Girdawri. Neither the entries in Revenue records are being updated regularly, nor is the spot position reflected properly and in absence of proper Girdawri, the Jamabandis are not being up dated leading to avoidable litigation. Absence of updated Revenue records is also one of the major reasons for delay in finalising land acquisition proceedings, which in turn badly affects execution of various developmental projects resulting in time and cost over runs."

What others say about Shri Parihar

i. **Shri Ashok Suri :** An IPS Officer from J & K cadre, who rose to

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become the Director General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir, had his first independent posting, in the early seventies of the past century, as the Sub-divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Akhnoor. During this tenure he took up the anti-smuggling campaign with a missionary zeal. "In this drive, he fondly recalls the very positive and supportive role played by his Revenue counterpart. The Tehsildar of Akhnoor, Rajinder Singh Parihar, was not only a thorough professional but also a totally incorruptible man, and he was a great source of strength to the young SDPO." (Dr. Sudhir S Bloeria, 'The Men Who Served J&K', Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2016, page- 116).

ii. **Shri S. A. Qayum :** One day while discussing about life story of late S. A. Qayum with his elder son, Sayed Shabeer, there came a reference about Rajinder Singh Parihar. Immediate reaction of the latter was, "what a great personality he is?" And then he narrated a story told to him by his late father as under;

"It was the month of June and probably the year was 1969, when both the Settlement Officer Consolidation (S. A. Qayum) and Tehsiidar Consolidation (Rajinder Singh Parihar) had been on official tour to a village falling under the jurisdiction of Naib Tehsildar Consolidation Marh, Tehsil Jammu. They straight way went to the fields where the staff was busy with measurement work. After routine checking, they went inside the village where the villagers had gathered for open public durbar. As soon as they sat, villagers offered sweet water added with little quantity of milk to the visiting team, as a usual courtesy. The weather was too hot being noon time of the month of June and there was lot of sweating after the field visit. As such everybody was feeling thirsty and quickly consumed the offered drink. As per Sayed Bashir, his father had told that he himself was feeling so thirsty that he gulped two-three glasses in no time. But Rajinder Singh Parihar declined the offer with folded hands. What a patience and determination?"

Last but not the least; Shri Parihar often seemed anxious to express his gratefulness towards Dr. Sudhir S. Bloeria, former Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir for the patronage and love received from him. According to him, Dr Bloeria keeps taking care of him even today and hoped that his blessings continue till he breathes his last.

To conclude the narrative, it would be appropriate to say that Shri Rajinder Singh Parihar intended to start his carrier as an I.A.S.

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officer - which he was not destined to; however, he has the satisfaction of retiring as such. He had to travel a long journey in his professional career starting from November 1959, (when he was admitted as a Naib Tehsildar Trainee) to June 2000 (when he retired). He earned his fame while being posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Director Land Records Jammu, Joint Commissioner Agrarian Reforms Jammu having Provincial jurisdiction, Additional Commissioner Jammu, Sales Tax Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir, Joint Financial Commissioner (Agrarian Reforms) and Excise Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir etc. and retired as Member of J&K Public service Commission on 19th June 2000. Amongst his batch mates (comprising around one hundred), he only had the distinction of reaching such a height. Nevertheless, he can be counted among very few officers of the State, who have the privilege of being so well known for their professional competence, integrity and moral values.



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SUDARSHAN SHARMA.

People, who have read any literature on the life of late Shri A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, might be aware that he wanted, rather strived, to become a Fighter Pilot, which desire of his could not be accomplished. On the other hand, destiny made him a Super Scientist of world fame and later on the President of India, which he might not have dreamt of ever. It is a general view that there are very few lucky people in the world whose desires or wish full thinking, particularly those of the childhood, are fulfilled; and Sudarshan Kumar Sharma, who is commonly known as Sudarshan Sharma is one among those lucky persons. Born on 16th of January 1954 at village Tarore situate at a distance of twenty kilometres from Jammu city, he was brought up in rural atmosphere. Earlier village Tarore formed part of Tehsil Samba District Jammu, but now (As per SRO 444 of 2014 dated 21-10-2014) it is part of new Tehsil Bari Brahmana, and new District Samba. After passing his Matriculation from Government High School Jakh, he Graduated from G.G.M. Science College Jammu and did M. A. English from Jammu University in the year 1977. By the time Sudarshan Sharma completed his education; his father late Shri Hans Raj Sharma, who had also served in the State Judicial Department, had retired from Government service. He was a Matriculate of pre-1947 period from Punjab University Lahore with good command over Urdu language. Besides, in view of nature of his job, he had gained good knowledge of reading, writing and interpreting legal documents like affidavit, sale deed, agreement to sell, gift deed and will deed etc. Therefore, people from his own as well as adjoining villages would often approach him at his residence for getting any such document interpreted and for any sort of guidance concerning thereto. This provided Sudarshan an opportunity to be associated with legal matters, in particular those connected with Revenue Department at a very early age of his life. He recalls that during his School and then College times, often there would be occasions for him to overhear discussions concerning various issues (including disputes) related to Revenue Department, including filing up of applications and appeals. Many a times, he happened to visit local Patwar Khana (Village/Site Office of a Patwari), and discuss various land issues with

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Zamindars including, sometimes, going through registers maintained by the Patwari. On several occasions he had the chance to attend camps organised in his village by Revenue Officers, as the village being located just on road side would be thought as a convenient place both for officers as well as the public. Over and above all that background, Sudarshan also had good command over Urdu language in so far as reading and writing were concerned. Besides, being a village-based guy, he had orientation to have knowledge about various activities related to Revenue Department functionaries, such as conduct of 'Girdawri' (Harvest Inspection), 'Intkal' (Mutation), Jamababdi and 'Fard Intkhab' etc. With all that at the back of mind, Sudarshan right from his School times had inculcated an ambition to join Administrative Service with first preference to become Tehsildar in the Revenue Department.

While Sudarshan Sharma was in search of opportunity for appearing in Combined Competitive Examination, he got appointed as Teacher and served in Government High/Higher Secondary Schools from 1977 till his cherished dream of joining administrative service got fulfilled in the year 1984. However, his entry into Administrative Service was not without a struggle. He appeared in the Combined Competitive Examination, held in the year 1979, but unfortunately records of Public Service Commission got gutted in an accidental fire before final result could be declared. He again appeared in the next session held in the year 1981, but for certain administrative reasons the selection process got delayed and was finalised in the year 1984; and he was among the lucky ones' who were selected for Junior Scale Kashmir Administrative Service, commonly known as K.A.S. Further he was fortunate enough to have been allotted Revenue Gazetted Service, which fulfilled his childhood dream.

After successfully completing his probation period of two years, Sudarshan got his first posting as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Doda in June 1986. It may be relevant to add here that Revenue Department field staff working in Doda (refers to old Doda District), Poonch and Rajouri Districts, having command over Urdu language and being traditionally hard workers, are deemed to be good Revenue Officials, in whole of the Jammu Division. At the same time, there is a general impression that new entrants to the Department, both from I.A.S. as well as K.A.S. feel handicapped in performing their official duties as Revenue Officers, at least during initial few years of their career, in view of poor or sometimes zero knowledge of Urdu language in particular. Therefore, when Sudarshan Sharma joined as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Doda, that being his first posting immediately after completing probation period, the field staff was apprehensive of his capabilities as a competent Revenue Officer.

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But to their astonishment, when they found the new Tehsildar writing mutation orders, inspection reports and other relevant documents in Urdu in his own hand, they were wonder struck, and at the same time highly appreciated the same. Thus, that was the first occasion when Sudarshan Sharma, just at the outset of his service career, felt encouraged to work hard after getting appreciation not only from his subordinates, and public but from higher authorities as well. Thereafter he did not look back and always continued to perform efficiently and in a better manner; he earned a name in the Department. Later he served as Tehsildar Ramban and Sunderbani, Joint Agrarian Reforms Commissioner Jammu, Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Additional Commissioner Jammu, Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Settlement Commissioner J and K, and finally retired on 31st of January 2014 from the post of Registrar Co-operative Societies J and K. He has the distinction of having been awarded with State Government's prestigious award, 'Chief Minister's GOLD MEDAL for Honesty, Integrity and Meritorious Public Service' in the year 2011, when he was working as Settlement Commissioner J and K State. In view of his all-round good performance, Sudarshan Sharma was inducted into Indian Administrative Service in the year 2011 although he was given 2000 as the year of allotment for purposes of his induction into the coveted service.

Among the initial years of his career, Sudarshan has termed his posting as Tehsildar (Teritorial) Sunderbani (from 4/1992 to 3/1994) as the most enjoyable as well as encouraging one, and the best tenure. According to him that was the place where he got ample opportunities to work harder, learn from the experience, prove his worth and earn goodwill of his superiors. He is of the view that the experience gained by him during his earlier two postings as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms Doda and Tehsildar (Territorial) Ramban gave him confidence and strength to perform in a better way. While he became popular among inhabitants of the Tehsil including the urban population of the Town for his simplicity, quick disposal and sympathetic attitude, he had the privilege of being instrumental in getting transferred huge acreage of land to the State Forest Department. In fact, large chunks of land, which were virtually Forest property, were still recoded in Revenue Records as 'State Land'. Taking advantage or disadvantage of the confusion there were a number of instances of locals having encroached upon/grabbed or further attempts to grab such lands unauthorisedly. Attempts on the part of Forest/Revenue Department to remove encroachments or not allowing further such acts, would often create law and order situations; and many a times the miscreants would drag the administration to Court cases.

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After taking the District Administration into confidence and, of course, after conducting field visits as also due enquiries, in association with officers of the Forest Department, Sudarshan, initiated the process of recording the lands by way of attesting mutations in favour of the State Forest Department. In the process, in all, an area to the extent of around 54000 Kanals was covered, thus sealing the possibility of the same being encroached upon by miscreants to a large extent. The effort was highly appreciated by one and all including the higher authorities and Sudarshan Sharma was honoured with a cash award from the Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri as a token of encouragement, which of course, boosted morale of the former.

Sudarshan recalls his experiences vis-à-vis the working of the Revenue Department, particularly when he was posted as Joint Agrarian Reforms Commissioner Jammu in the following words: -

"While performing as Joint Agrarian Reforms Commissioner Jammu, I had the privilege of examining different types of records old as well as fresh. I came across various issues related to Revenue Records. I would often discuss many cases with old Revenue Officers and sometimes even with Advocates. In this respect Krishan Singh my 'Reader' who had also served as Girdawer Qanungo and Naib Tehsildar with me in my earlier postings, was very helpful. He had very good knowledge of Revenue records. It would not be wrong to say that I got a good opportunity of studying diverse type of Revenue cases, both concerning disputes arising out of Land Revenue Act as well as the Agrarian Reforms Act. For the purposes of arriving at a just opinion, before deciding a case, I had to study hard and analyse the remand cases as also the decisions delivered by experienced Revenue Officers, like Rajinder Singh Parihar, Kulbhushan Sharma and others."

Similarly, while he was posted as Additional Commissioner Jammu - a post in the office of Divisional Commissioner Jammu; mainly supposed to deal with Appeal/Revision cases, as may be transferred to him by the Divisional Commissioner from time to time; he describes that to be a very satisfying job, as there too he had ample opportunities to display his ability as also to gain knowledge with the study of critical cases and analysis of Revenue work of the entire Division. During that period, mainly Shri Parmod Jain remained his Divisional Commissioner, who would invariably refer almost all cases concerning Revenue matters to him for views. Although, at times, he would feel over worked, yet at the same time that helped enhancing his knowledge and skill to a great extent. According to Sudarshan, while dealing with cases, particularly the Appeals and Revisions before him, he had the opportunity to study

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related Acts, Rules, important decisions pronounced by various authorities in the past, as also the working of other Revenue Officers from lowest to the highest level in the Department. That way he feels lucky to have been provided with ample opportunities as also occasions to improve upon his knowledge about working in Revenue Department.

Sudarshan Sharma has often spoken high of the then Financial Commissioner (Revenue), Shri S. D. Singh, who according to the former was very curious, practical and punctual in attending to and the disposal of case work in his own court as well as in the courts of his subordinate officers. He would listen to arguments of both the parties very keenly, and invariably keep proper notes about important points put forth during the arguments. In important cases, he would not hesitate to get briefs prepared, and discuss with other senior officers, before making up of his mind in deciding the case. In particular, he is said to have been very strict that once arguments had been heard and the case adjourned for judgement, the same should not be adjourned further; as according to the latter, on the one hand poor clients had to suffer for fault of the presiding officer and on the other credibility of the officers would become questionable. Besides, Sudarshan admits to have enriched his knowledge in respect of working of the Revenue Department during his posting as Joint Agrarian Reforms Commissioner in particular under the subordination of Shri S. D. Singh; and this he once disclosed in the following words:

"I had the privilege of meeting and discussing different types of issues pertaining to the Land Revenue Act and the Agrarian Reforms Act in detail with the then Financial Commissioner (Revenue). Many a times the latter would entrust certain files to me for making briefs. Before doing the needful, I used to take help from the related staff of the Financial Commissioner's office and that helped me in understanding as also learning, in great detail, the intricacies and ramifications of relevant Revenue Laws, and of course, that would involve considerable amount of time for studying those cases."

In the course of one of my discussions with Sharma, he did not fail to recall his varied (both Khatta and Meetha, i.e. sweet and sour) experiences while he was posted as Settlement Commissioner - a prestigious assignment in the Revenue Department. Settlement operation is one of most important tasks assigned to the Revenue Department, wherein after a gap of a certain period, usually forty to fifty years, all the lands are re-measured and revised map as also record of all the holdings in every estate is prepared afresh, which in common parlance is called as 'Record of Rights'. The Settlement Commissioner is

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the head of that particular wing under the overall supervision of the Financial Commissioner (Revenue). In the first instance, Sudarshan would also not hesitate to recount the help rendered by his Reader, Nisar Ahmed an officer of the cadre of Tehsildar; who, according to the former, has been a hard-working officer with unimpeachable integrity. He pointed out that they (Sudarshan and Nisar Ahmed) would often sit together and have comparative study of laws administered by the Revenue Department. He also disclosed that once the then Chief Secretary, Shri Madhav Lal, during a meeting in his chamber, which among others was attended by Sudarshan in his capacity of Settlement Commissioner as well, had expressed interest in reviewing the existing laws administered by the Revenue Department. According to him, during the course of the meeting the Chief Secretary was very much impressed by the replies provided by the former to the queries put forth by the latter on the subject of discussion. That, according to Sudarshan, was the result of the exercise he had undertaken in association with his Reader - Nisar Ahmed, and the experience gained by him as discussed in earlier part of the narrative. At the same time, he is of the view that the same proved very helpful in arriving at decisions in various matters which came before him during the course of performing official business, rather that had acted as a source of encouragement for him in his future service career. In general, while discussing his experiences, with regard to the working of the Settlement wing of the Revenue Department, Sudarshan made certain disquieting revelations which are best told in his own words as follows: -

"During my stint as Settlement Commissioner of the State, I found that record preparation and measurement work were not being given due importance. I was astonished to see that main thrust, those days, was on completion of work i.e. achieving targets without adhering to guidelines laid down for that purpose. The Patwaris, the Girdawars and Naib Tehsildars would usually complain of shortage of time; they would be called by the Deputy Commissioners and other authorities for other allied works, which would certainly disturb the pace and progress of Settlement work. Besides, Revenue Officers (dealing with Settlement job) at the level of Naib Tehsildars and Tehsildars would have just cursory glance of the records prepared by the subordinate staff, and usually put their signature on the documents, without performing even statuary checking and ensuring that errors as well as omissions, if any pointed out, had been corrected or rectified. It was often told that Officers were more interested in completion rather than correct preparation of records. I was once astonished to be informed that more than three hundred 'Record of Rights' have been shown as deposited in the Record Room, and later on, on physical inspection thereof revealed that those were not actually

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completed up to the mark. During my tenure as Settlement Commissioner, I tried to see that all the records, though might take more time, would be prepared correctly. With the active support of the then Financial Commissioner as also the Divisional Commissioner, I was able to set things right through organising frequent meetings, and having close monitoring of the working in the field."

Elaborating his view point, Sudarshan further added as under;

"It is not that only the Revenue field staff and Offices are to be blamed alone for the tardy speed of work in Settlement operations including measurement as also preparation of records. Higher authorities at Ministry level are equally responsible. I as Settlement Commissioner saw that political masters only pay lip service and had practically no interest in correct preparation of records. They would resort to frequent transfers, but pay scant interest to various proposals initiated by the Department. I as Settlement Commissioner submitted so many proposals, but of no avail."

On the issue of dealing with law and order, Sudarshan has dealt many events during his service career, but has two occasions, in particular, to recall; one while he was posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner of the border District of Rajouri, and the other when he was himself at the helm of affairs, being Deputy Commissioner cum District Magistrate, of the then newly created District Kishtwar. The events have been summarised in the following paragraphs.

i. Rajouri incident. Roughly it was January 2003, when militants, in a surprise move, struck in Suderbani area and martyred four local youth, which became a cause of extreme resentment among the civilian population of the area. With the timely intervention of the local administration, Civil as well as Police, the dead bodies were cremated on the assurance from the administration that culprits would be suitably punished. Next day, a group of people belonging to one community tried to raise a memorial at the place, where the dead bodies of the martyred youth were cremated. But people belonging to other community, claiming the land under reference to be their property, objected to the raising of the memorial. Within no time that became a point of prestige between the two communities, and people started gathering in huge numbers. At one point of time the situation became so tense that in order to avoid any untoward happening, the Officers handling the situation on spot thought it desirable to disperse the mob on both the sides. But when repeated warnings and announcements to disperse did not work, the Police Officer in charge on spot sought shoot orders. From civil side,

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Sudarshan Sharma was in command on spot, in his capacity as Additional Deputy Commissioner (Additional District Magistrate), Rajouri. After giving due consideration to the situation on spot, Sudarshan avoided to issue shoot order despite persistent demand from the Police side; instead he ordered the Police to, in the first instance, resort to Lathi (cane) charge, simultaneously on both the sides. The strategy worked, and the Police succeeded in dispersing the mob. This way, just by maintaining his cool and presence of mind, an untoward situation was avoided. This is great quality as also hallwork of an experienced Revenue and field officer. Had shoot order been issued, God knows how much loss of human life would have been there?

ii. Kishtwar incident. Kishtwar falls at the extreme end of erstwhile Doda District bordering Himachal Pardesh. People of Kishtwar had been demanding grant of District status to their area for a period of more than a decade. In the month of July 2006, the State Government effected a major Administrative re-organisation, as a part of which the demand of Kishtwar people was acceded to. But, it was with the issuance of SRO No: 185 dated 22-05-2007 that after boundaries of the Tehsils forming part thereof and that of the District as a whole were ordered, this new District came to be in existence in real sense.

Sudarshan Sharma was the second Deputy Commissioner of the newly created far flung District of the State. That was the period when the State was facing tense conditions as a result of a prolonged agitation on account of Shri Amar Nath Shrine Board land row, but fortunately enough, situation in the District of Kishtwar had remained peaceful. But, Sudarshan vividly recalls the date i.e. 12th of August 2008 when all of a sudden, the situation in the town became tense; it was a holiday on account of Eid. After culmination of Eid prayers, tension among the people belonging to the two communities started mounting. Within no time the town was abuzz with all sorts of rumours and people started coming out on streets. Therefore, in order to avoid further worsening of the situation, as a first safe guard, Curfew was clamped immediately, which continued to be in force for around twelve days, with relaxation of few hours in between. On few occasions, however, people not only became very agitated, but unreasonable too; they virtually declined to co-operate with the District Administration. In order to retrieve the lost ground, action had to be taken under Public Security Act as well, although very selectively. However, despite provocation on a few occasions, shoot order was not resorted to which, according to Sudarshan, helped fast returning the situation to normal with minor incidents of rioting and violence at times. Various authorities including the then Hon'ble

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Governor, who happened to review the situation on spot, did appreciate and rather complimented the District Administration for handling the situation quite wisely.

In the eyes of Sudarshan in the current scenario, some most important points observed by him include, that confusion is prevailing at every level amongst Revenue Officers in the Department. The officers and the staff lack correct appreciation as also interpretation of various Acts and Rules being implemented by the Department, which require deep study and understanding of the same. According to him, at present adhocism rules the roost. Everything is done for the sake of fulfilling a task; that may or may not be as per the actual requirement of the rules or regulations. Besides, a sense of deprivation and despondence has engulfed the system, especially among the workers, who are otherwise efficient and laborious. That is mainly because of the fact that they are not being appreciated, and rather over burdened. Good workers are not being encouraged, whereas corrupt do manage choice postings, even promotions. It is not that there is dearth of efficient and hard-working officials, but they are not given their due, rather they are being sidelined or ignored. He further says that presently the Revenue Department is virtually derailed. Prescribed systems and procedures are not being strictly adhered to, and that is more due to the lack of understanding at all the levels. The lower functionaries require guidance, but there is hardly any officer, particularly at District level, who can render clear guidance. Sudarshan has got a very strong feeling that in fact, the fault lies in the prevailing system, whereunder officers mostly drawn from other Departments are posted in the Revenue Department, who have no understanding as also the training about the working of the Revenue Department, not even theoretic knowledge of rules and laws to be implemented. When supervisory officers are totally blank in their knowledge of the Revenue Administration, how can one expect them to provide guidance to the lower staff? In support of his view point, he would often cite the two sample instances in the following words: -

i. "In a meeting of Revenue Officers convened by the Financial Commissioner (Revenue) and among others participated by me as well; the Deputy Commissioner Jammu told that his Patwaris require lessons in learning Urdu language. In the same meeting when the Financial Commissioner, enquired from participating officers including S. D. Ms as to whether they had ever gone through volume IV of the Statuary Rules, the latter pleaded ignorance."

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N.B. Volume IV of the 'Statuary Rules' of the State (old edition) contained almost all rules framed under the Acts, in particular being implemented by the Revenue Department.

ii. "In another meeting convened by Revenue Minister, and attended by all Revenue Officers of Jammu Division, the Deputy Commissioners were asked to prepare 'Pass Books'. When specifically enquired, all participants including Additional Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners expressed ignorance about the amendments incorporated in the Land Revenue Act for preparation of Pass Books."

The above narrative depicts the state of affairs prevailing in the Department at present.

In the views of Sudarshan, there is dire need to take remedial steps, and in order to bring back the Department on sound footing, he has following suggestions to make;

i. Majority of officers at supervisory level of Assistant Commissioner and Sub-divisional Magistrate lack knowledge on the matters being dealt by the Department, and those who have undergone training or have experience do not update their knowledge. Therefore, training programmes need be organised on regular basis for all officers from the level of Assistant Commissioners/Sub-divisional Magistrates to down below, including refresher and capsule courses for study of Revenue Laws and Rules as also implementation thereof.

ii. Training in handling of computers, latest technology in measurement as also mapping of land including through ETS, should be imparted regularly to the functionaries at all the levels in the Department.

iii. Only officers having sufficient and practical knowledge about the working of the Revenue Department should be posted in the field. Every posting should be for a fixed tenure; powers for transfer and promotion need be de-centralised, and performance linked.

iv. Ministerial staff also need be trained in handling of Revenue related matters. In particular, Readers, Peshi Clerks and Office Qanungos need be trained to handle their job professionally.

v. Administrative inspections at the level of Financial Commissioner and the Divisional Commissioner should be made a regular

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feature. Follow up actions need to be ensured after carrying out inspections.

vi. There are laid down procedures for dealing with all types of matters at various levels. Those need to be got strictly followed.

vii. Regular interaction at the level of officers and field staff is needed and its sanctity maintained. Field workers should be duly listened. In fact, there should be two to three days District level conferences of Revenue Officers and Field staff, after a gap of every few months, where problems should be openly discussed. Patwaris and Girdawers should be provided opportunity to give their suggestions freely and those need be given due weightage in evolving solutions for successful implementation of various programmes.

In support of his above suggestion, Sudarshan once mentioned that while working in Settlement wing, he had made it a regular practice to interact freely with basic workers after almost every two-three months and according to him that worked very well. As a result of discussions and feedback from subordinate agency, various proposals were sent to the Government for bringing improvements in the working of the Revenue Department. He however, while expressing a sad feeling, added that although everyone acknowledges the Revenue Department to be the back bone of administration, proposals for bringing improvements are not being given due consideration. Continuing his observations, he also added that post retirement, he had an opportunity to work with 'Ram Tech' - the company which had been outsourced the work of measurement and computerisation of Land Records. During the course of interaction with officers of the company and the Revenue Department, he was at a loss to know that even the tradition of holding review meetings have been given go by.

viii. Settlement Organisation need to be strengthened by providing sufficient, efficient and trained staff, and once posted should not be transferred arbitrarily.

ix. Financial Commissioner (Revenue) should be given a minimum period of three years tenure. Similarly, the Settlement Commissioner and Settlement Officers should have fixed tenure of not less than three years.

x. Obsolete Laws and Rules should be identified and process initiated for getting them rescinded.

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Before concluding narrative concerning Sudarshan Sharma, it would be quite in place to add that main idea behind writing of this book was to highlight fast growing decline about name fame and working of the Revenue Department. Among others, the main reason which can be easily attributed to the decline seems to be that today's Revenue Officers have forgotten traditions being followed in the Department from times immemorial. Although, more details in this regard will be covered in a latter chapter titled "conclusion", yet making mention of a few instances here would be appropriate. For instance, as mentioned in earlier part of this narrative, how writing mutation orders and reports by Sudarshan in Urdu and that too in his own hand worked wonders in creating positive impression, at the very initial stage of his service career, besides receiving appreciation not only from his subordinates and public, but from higher authorities as well; today's Revenue Officers would hardly aspire of or even dream of the same. Another good quality, as observed in the case of Sudarshan Sharma as a Revenue Officer, was that before deciding cases he would not hesitate in discussing the same with old Revenue Officers or Officials, sometimes even with experienced Advocates, as also to analyse the matters with reference to cases decided by few reputed old Revenue Officers.Today's Revenue Officers, it is widely understood, lack such traits. His remarks at an earlier page,"lower functionaries require guidance, but there is hardly any officer, particularly at District level, who could render clear guidance", speak volumes about the situation prevailing at the present times. Such a feeling cannot be expressed by an officer who himself is not well versed in prescribed procedures and established practices of the Department. His concern about non-conduct of Administrative Inspections at the level of higher authorities as also importance of regular interaction with field officials depicts his deep-rooted knowledge about working of the Revenue Department. These traits and qualities, it is strongly believed, are found missing among Revenue Officers of present times and Sudarshan Sharma seems to be an exception.

Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that Shri Sudarshan Sharma appears to be one of the last of the fading breed of traditional Revenue Officers, and as such very rightly he deserved to be included in the list of people being mentioned in the book.



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VED PARKASH GUPTA

In the present day set up of the society, joint family system has become a thing of the past. But Ved Parkash Gupta recalls to have been brought up in a joint family of five brothers, where the grand mother would always take pleasure in serving the needs of grand children numbering about two dozen, and he often feels proud of the solid impact, of the traditional culture of those days; he had in his tender age. At the same time, at the advanced age of 90 years, he feels saddened by the non-visibility of the affection, particularly among first cousins in the present-day nuclear family system, which according to him has resulted in change of thought and behaviour of almost every person. Ved Parkash further expresses that having been brought up in a puritan but a rigid 'sanctions' family, inculcated sense of discipline and rigidity, which worked in a rather negative manner in the changed times and made him a lonely man in a big family.

Born on October 29, 1930 at Mirpur (Now part of POK), in the family of Shri Devi Chand (father) and Smt. Rukmani Devi (mother), among his acquaintances he is generally known as Ved ji. His father was an old time Graduate from Punjab University. He was a Teacher in Government School and retired on superannuation in 1955 as 2nd Master from Government High School R. S. Pura. Ved Parkash was studying in 12th class at Mirpur when, as the luck would have been, he along with his entire family rather the entire town had to move out of their native place in the wake of disturbances of 1947. Although he has not forgotten the sad happenings of that period, which resulted in leaving not only the birth place but everything the family belonged, besides loosing precious lives of many loved ones/close relatives and friends, he chose not to make a mention of any of the events at this stage. But, definitely he had very sweet memories about Mirpur - his birth place, where he had spent his childhood, and has told some factual details about the town as under:

"The historical town of Mirpur has become a part of the history now. First, with the implementation of 'Cease Fire Agreement' in the year 1948, the town became part of POK, and most of the Hindu and Sikh

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population migrated to Jammu, Punjab and Delhi etc. Secondly with the undertaking of a Hydro Electric Project by Pakistan in sixties of the past century, the town got submerged in manmade lake with the construction of a Dam known as 'Mangla Dam' on river Jehlam. The population thus dislocated is reported to have settled in other parts of POK/Pakistan with a number of families to have moved abroad. The town was situated on an even plateau at some height from a dry river bed, known as 'Khad', and name of the town is said to have been derived from two famous saints of the area namely, 'SAIN MIRA' and 'BUDHPURI'. The dry river had a width of around one kilometre, which was divided by a 'Bundh'. The reclaimed portion of the dry river which fell adjoining the town had few religious places, like Mandir, Shivalaya, and Mosque etc. In almost every such place, there used to be existed shallow wells and one step well known as 'Bowli'. Besides 'Dushera Ground' and Cremation Ground called 'Chahian', there was a big Pacca Talab where women of the town would often go for washing of clothes. Mirpur was an old District with an estimated population of above twelve thousand souls, out of which around sixty per cent belonged to business community of Guptas/Mahajans. The town was in length, divided equally by a long Bazar. On both ends of the Bazar, there existed two big gates, like the gates of Mubarak Miandi Jammu, known as 'Hathi Darwajas'. On the east end, there was a Gurdwara with a Pacca step Talab. A reasonable portion of the Talab was covered with high walls to provide bathing place for ladies. On the western end there was as 'Jamia Masjid', whereas a 'Raghunath Temple' was in the middle of the town located on bank of the dry river.

The town was thickly populated with Pacca houses, many of those with double storey, and some multi storey buildings. The town was also known for few wells, one located in 'Arya Smaj premises, the other in the Bazar just opposite 'Snatan Dharam Sabha' and another in a religious place in 'Murda Gali'. These wells being too deep were not in common use. Outside the town on southern side there was a big and magnificent step well, known as 'Bhagat Kesar Di Bowli', but that was completely in disuse with a saying that, the 'Bowli' was infested with ghosts/was an abode of Parian (Fairies). There were few pathways (Dhakis) paved with sand stones to reach downhill situate wells, for taking bath and washing of clothes. Two well known pathways (Dhakis) were 'Pandhi-Di- Dhaki' and 'Parthian-Di-Dhaki'. For the information of the readers, it will be in place to make a mention that whole of the sector covered under areas falling in Jehlam, Rawalpindi, Mirpur and some parts of Poonch/Rajouri was known as 'Pathwar' with its language/culture as 'Pathwari'. Alas! The

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beautiful city of 'Pathwari', its culture and language with harmonious relations among different religions and sects have vanished forever."

At the time of disturbances, father of Shri ved Parkash was already serving as a Master in Sri Ranbir Government High School Jammu, but in the flood of migration rest of the family moved to Jallandhar (Punjab) where they remained for around eleven years. At Jallandhar, in order to meet the family expenses, initially Ved Parkash did some private job, but in November 1949 he got an appointment as a Clerk in Rehabilitation Department. However, in order to fulfil his cherished desire right from his childhood, which got disrupted for reasons beyond his control, Ved Parkash continued his studies through a private Academy, and after Graduation he even did his Master of Arts in Hindi from Punjab University in the year 1957. In the mean time he got married in the year 1950 and God Almighty blessed him with three children while their family stayed at Jallandhar. While at Jallandhar, he had the privilege of association with personalities like, Gopal Chander Dev, M.A., M.O.L an erstwhile publisher, who had migrated from Lahore, Daya Krishan Gardish a famous writer of Jammu and Triloki Nath an editor in an Urdu Weekly, which did influence his future bent of mind. That may be the reason for his interest towards story writing and he has published at least two books so far besides contributing in various Magazines by his Articles and Short Stories.

Ved Parkash had not even completed his third decade of life, when another change (third) in the place of residence was awaiting him, and in this connection, he once disclosed an interesting turn of event in his life. It was a period long before the disturbances of 1947 (probably the year 1935-36) and his father was posted as Head Master in Government Middle School at Rajouri, when Shri Nisar Husain Shah - a young Revenue Officer from Kashmir Valley was also posted as Naib Tehsildar there. His father and Nisar Husain Shah had developed a friendship, but after transfer of the latter to Valley they did not meet each other for a long period. Again, as the luck would have been, after a gap of around two decades both happened to meet at Raghunath Bazar Jammu. After exchange of pleasantries, Nisar Husain Shah, who by that time had become Financial Commissioner (now a day's Financial Commissioner-Revenue), told father of Ved Parkash that Government intended to recruit Naib Tehsildar candidates and asked to suggest someone from refugee families, if any was available. The father proposed the name of his son, Ved Parkash, and within next few months when the first list, comprising fifty-eight candidates, approved for undergoing training as Naib

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Tehsildar, was issued by the Government, his name was there. And that became a cause of their return to Jammu.

After successful completion of training in Revenue Training Institute Jammu for two years and a six-month long training in Consolidation of Holdings at Billari (Moradabad-U. P.), Ved Parkash got his first posting as Naib Tehsildar Consolidation, (those days called as Assistant Consolidation Officer) Salehar (R. S. Pura) in September 1961. Although Consolidation of Holdings was a very agriculturist's friendly and revolutionary scheme, the same came to be closed, within a year or so, where after he was posted as Naib Tehsildar Samba. At initial stage he does not seem to have enjoyed his posting at Samba as, in his own words, he found his Tehsildar and Naib Tehsildars to be typically old-fashioned Revenue Officers, who even discouraged him rather wasted his few years to pass departmental examination, which came in way of his promotion as Tehsildar. Among other experiences during his posting at Samba, once he disclosed an interesting story in the following words:-

"One day his Tehsildar (Name with held) invited him for a dinner at his residence. He reached the residence of the Tehsildar at the fixed time. While serving welcome/soft drink, the Tehsildar enquired from Ved Parkash, if he liked chicken or mutton, and he replied that his family was traditionally vegetarian. His next question was as to which brand of whiskey he would like to have. To that question again he replied that he didn't take any. The Tehsildar then offered him famous brand of those times 'Panama' cigarette. On hearing the reply that he didn't smoke, the Tehsildar exclaimed, then for what the hell you have joined the Revenue Department?" To which the reply was "Have come to work with a determination and mind to work."

He however, later discovered that after observing hard work, integrity and devotion to duty, he received full support and due respect from all; and concluded that if one works hard with no motives attached, people around you do recognise the same to a considerable large extent.

Later on, when good sense prevailed, Ved Parkash appeared in the departmental examination held by Public Service Commission, and cleared the same in year 1968. The same year he was promoted and posted as P.A. (Tehsildar) to Divisional Commissioner Jammu. He often recounts his experience of working with Choudhary Bharat Bhushan as his immediate superior (Divisional Commissioner). According to him he has learnt a lot while serving as P.A. to Divisional Commissioner. He would often call Ved Parkash to his chamber and tell tips to become a successful Revenue Officer, besides telling his own experiences in the field. The

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Divisional Commissioner, though himself a hard worker and also a hard taskmaster, was very much impressed by hard work and devotion towards duty by Ved Parkash.

Since May 1961, when we (Shri Ved Parkash and the author) were under training in Consolidation of Holdings at Billari- Moradabad (U.P.) followed by posting of both of us in Consolidation Organisation in R. S, Pura Tehsil, we have remained associated with each other. Therefore, often there had been interaction with regard to events concerning the service career of each other. Thus, some more important events in the professional life of Shri Ved Parkash Gupta are narrated in the following paragraphs.

While he was posted as P.A. to Divisional Commissioner Jammu, a communication was received from the Administrative Department seeking recommendations for identification of areas for introduction of compensatory allowance. The communication was marked by the latter to the former for putting up proposal within three days. Next day Ved Parkash called on the Divisional Commissioner and expressed his inability to do the needful without seeking reports from respective Deputy Commissioners. The former was expecting that the latter might feel annoyed by his response to the important issue, but to his surprise, the latter very smilingly said, "I can understand your concern as you are not aware of the topography of whole of the Province, so keep the letter with me." Hesitantly, he handed over the letter to the latter. After two days the Divisional Commissioner again called Ved Parkash and handed him over a hand-written draft proposal spread over around three pages with advice to get the same typed out and sent to the Administrative Department urgently. In the words of Ved Parkash, after reading the proposal he was wonder struck to find a so well worded reply full of minute details with regard to typography of each area with detailed justifications as also the rates recommended for consideration. For him it was a wonder full feeling that an officer at that level had so deep knowledge about his area of operation.

Again, when Ved Parkash was still in the office of Divisional Commissioner, the latter one day (probably the month of November 1969) sought his choice in case he was to be posted in the field. In reply Ved Parkash indicated that since his children were of tender age and would require his supervision, he may be considered to be posted in any of the Tehsils in the District Jammu or Kathua. But when transfer orders were issued, he was posted in a far-flung Tehsil Budhal of District Rajouri. Budhal is situate at a distance of seventy-two Kilometres even from

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District head quarter - Rajouri. It may be in place to indicate that earlier head quarter of Tehsil Kotranka used to be at Budhal, and that in those days, the road between Kotranka and Budhal would often get blocked during rainy season. After handing over charge, when Ved Parkash called on the Divisional Commissioner, the latter expressed with regret that for reasons beyond his control, he did not succeed in managing his posting in a nearby Tehsil, but assured that he will be brought back soon, and in fact the assurance was also fulfilled. Before leaving the office, the Divisional Commissioner did advise Ved Parkash to be in touch with erstwhile Zaildar Shiv Singh, who in his opinion was a respectable of the locality and could be relied upon. Ved Parkash later found that the person named by the Divisional Commissioner, was actually quite helpful in resolving disputed issues as and when the need arose. On the one hand he commanded respect among the locals, on the other he was friend of the administration as well.

Once he recalled the winter of 1970. It was the month of January, and the then Deputy Commissioner Rajouri (Lala Ishar Dass) visited Budhal on official tour. Despite extreme cold required arrangements for his night stay were made. Next day after completion of his work, when the Deputy Commissioner was just to leave for his back journey, a wireless message - the only reliable mode of communication available those days, was received from Divisional Commissioner Jammu conveying, "reaching Budhal on 30th" (next day). Therefore, the Deputy Commissioner extended his stay. Budhal being a remote area, devoid of adequate facilities for stay of senior officers, arrangements for night stay were made as per availability of the resources. As those days there were no attached bath rooms, particularly at a place like Budhal, next morning, both the Divisional Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner went outside for answering call of nature, in local language called as 'Lota Paani', without any hesitation. The Tehsildar had arranged lunch at his residence, and as he knew that his cook would not cut (Jhatkka) chiken, so he got that done from another person. Later at lunch time, he came to know that the cook had not cooked chicken as he would not even touch Jhatkka chicken/meat. Hurriedly, some other person was called to do the need full, but that would have taken some time. When the matter came to the notice of the Divisional Commissioner, he took it very lightly. He knew that both the Deputy Commissioner and the Tehsidar were vegetarian and some food might have been cooked for them as well, so asked to serve whatever was cooked in the kitchen, in his own words, "Dal-Phulka". Ved Parkash was highly appreciative of the pragmatic approach of an officer at such a senior level.

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Ved Parkash vividly remembers a date i.e. 27th March 1970, while he was still posted at Budhal, when Lala Ishar Dass the then Deputy Commissioner Rajouri called the former in his office, and handed him over cash worth rupees ninety thousand to be disbursed to right full claimants on account of Tacavi Loan, with a direction to complete the task, in any case, by 31st of March - closing of the financial year. He left Rajouri in the evening and reached Budhal by 11 P.M. Next day he went to Kotranka, then a Niabat and a central location. He camped there for two days, sent for the claimants through his subordinate agency and disbursed the amount at the rate of rupees 500/- per family, and a few who could not reach were called to Budhal for the next day. This way the task was completed by evening of 31st March, the cash book completed, and acquaintance roll duly attested along with other connected papers were forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner, who promptly conveyed the massage, "Well-done".

Once when Ved parkash was posted as Tehsildar Mendhar, and before joining new place of posting, he called on the Divisional Commissioner for his advice, the latter cautioned him to be care full from a local self-styled leader (in common parlance known as Kharrpench) - (Name withheld). Ved Parkash Gupta further added that the day he took over charge at Mendhar, he found a number of people waiting in his office chamber. He heard all one by one and disposed them off, but one man remained sitting. When he was asked to tell his problem, if any, and in response when he introduced himself, Ved Parkash could easily recognise him to be the person indicated by the Divisional Commissioner. The self-styled leader then wanted to know from the Tehsildar, if the latter would be interested in earning illicit money, in which case he could be of help to him. The Tehsildar while maintaining his cool, which normally a man of his character would find difficult, very politely replied, "Till today I have not indulged in any such practice, the day I would change my mind your services will be availed of." After hearing the curt reply, he left the room and never came again till Ved Parkash Gupta remained there, except the day he was posted out and that too only to thank him for his selfless working style.

Another event during his posting at Mendhar pertained to the period when Shri G.N. Naik was the Deputy Commissioner of Poonch. According to Ved Parkash, Shri Naik was also a man of principles and a friendly senior officer. After 1971 war, with the implementation of famous 'Shimla Agreement' certain village along LOC, which were earlier part of POK, became part of District Poonch along with population of the area. Those villages were spread over two Tehsils of Poonch (Haveli) and

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Mendhar. With a view to facilitate their settlement, it was decided to provide them some cash assistance. The amount of cash assistance so received was handed over by the Deputy Commissioner to respective Tehsidars for further distribution. During the process of receiving the money as also guide lines for the distribution, Ved Parkash the then Tehsildar Mendhar requested the Deputy Commissioner that Rajinder Sharma, the then Assistant Commissioner Development, Poonch be associated with him for the purpose, so as to speed up the process of distribution, and the request was acceded to. The team held a camp in the area and completed the disbursement of whole of the amount in such a transparent manner, without misappropriation of a single rupee and within the shortest possible time that not only the particular area but whole of the District was abuzz with this performance. As soon as the news reached the Deputy Commissioner, he called Ved Parkash to his Chamber, embraced him and conveyed his thanks for the excellent job. In the words of Ved Parkash, "the gesture on the part of the Deputy Commissioner made him feel very much elated and encouraged".

In the year 1972, when Ved Parkash was posted as Tehsildar Kathua, the Divisional Commissioner, Jammu visited in connection with conduct of administrative inspection. During discussions the latter, among other items also reviewed progress of writing up of Jamabandies, and issued directions to take up Jamabandies of villages Kathua proper (Taraf Tajwal) and Forloan on priority. Village Forlan covers a large area scattered on both sides of river 'Ujh'. In those two villages lot of mutations had been attested in the wake of implementation of Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, and the Jamabandies had not been up dated for a long period, due to which it was not an easy task to do the same. However, in view of the specific directions of the Divisional Commissioner, work was taken up and Jamabandies of both the villages completed in record time. On his next visit after a few months, the Divisional Commissioner, when apprised of the position felt quite happy and profusely congratulated all concerned. The latter was informed that Jambandies were drawn up for the first time after a long gap and large number of mutations affected in connection with implementation of Big Landed Estates Abolition Act had made the job cumbersome. The job could not have been done in routine and the Patwari had to put in extra labour rather burn midnight oil to accomplish the same. Therefore, Ved Parkash in his own words "requested the Divisional Commissioner to promote the Patwari as Girdawar, which he did at spur of the moment."

In all the events narrated above, the incumbent Divisional Commissioner happened to be Ch. Bharat Bhushan. In the context of Ch.

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Bharat Bhushan, during one sitting with Ved Parkash in connection with review of the above narrative, he expressed his pleasant feeling in the following words;

"Having got occasions to work with stalwarts like Choudhary Bharat Bhushan, one should proudly set them as role modles. I still relish the experience I had with a person who knew men and areas perfectly, besides being a guiding star for his subordinates."

During the period Ved Parkash was posted as Tehsildar Mendhar, once it came to his notice that a self-styled local leader (name forgotten with the passage of time) was virtually but unauthorisedly exercising powers like that of Revenue Authorities; he would demolish 'Jhugis' raised over vacant State lands by poor house less persons, who so ever would not pay him money. Taking serious note of it, the Tehsildar called him to his office chamber and admonished him to desist from such type of unauthorised activity in future. That did not go well with him and after a few days when the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Mir Nasar Ullah - a very fine, soft spoken Officer and a towering personality, was on a visit to the District headquarter; the so-called self-styled leader called on the latter and spoke against rude behaviour of the Tehsildar. Since, after occurrence of the incident under reference, the Tehsildar, what was expected of from a seasoned Revenue Officer, had informed of the same to his Deputy Commissioner; when the complaint was lodged, the later who happened to be sitting there, he apprised the Divisional Commissioner of the back ground. So, the Divisional Commissioner did not take the complaint seriously, and in a very routine manner told the complainant that he would look into the matter. Thereafter, while chairing meeting of Revenue Officers of the District, the Divisional Commissioner, enquired from Ved Parkash, whether he often use stick while dealing with public. Without hesitation, the latter replied, "Sir, not always." The Divisional Commissioner threw a pleasant smile and said, "Yes, sometimes it is proper for a Revenue Officer to deal with sternly as the situation may demand". But at the same time advised Ved Parkash to leave the stick, as in view of changed times that type of action on the part of a Revenue Officer was not warranted. And Ved Parkash adds that since that very day he discontinued to hold stick in his hands while on tour or other official duty.

On his promotion, Ved Parkash was posted as Asistant Commissioner Poonch where he remained from May 1975 to October 1977. He would not fail to recall the period he spent with Shri Wajahat Habib Ullah, the then Deputy Commissioner Poonch, whom he would like

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to call, in his own words' "a par excellent, simple and straight forward officer". During that very period, it was decided to repopulate the areas from where earlier people had been de-populated due to disturbances on LOC. For that purpose, it was decided to allot them plots of land at the sites selected for their re-settlement. Deputy Commissioner wanted the allotment cases to be routed through, the Assistant Commissioner, but Ved Parkash expressed inability in view of his being already over burdened with existing work load including huge number of pending judicial cases under section 107/151 or section 145 of Criminal Procedure Code. The latter tried to explain to the former that in those cases large number of innocent people were involved and mostly the cases were instituted by mighty people to just avenge personal animosity; therefore, unnecessary delay in disposal of such cases would not be justified. The Deputy Commissioner did not mind such reaction from the Assistant Commissioner, rather appreciated his concern for the poor people, but added that he would have to do some extra labour to attend to the assigned job as well in order to see that only right full people are accommodated. Thereafter, Ved Parkash not only accepted but accomplished the task to the entire satisfaction of the Deputy Commissioner.

After Poonch, Ved Parkash was posted as Assistant Commissioner Nazool Jammu, when Dr. Sudhir S Bloeria was the Deputy Commissioner of District Jammu. Here that was the first time that both came into contact and became each other's fan. When Dr Bloeria became Development Commissioner Ladakh, he got Ved Parkash posted as his Assistant Commissioner Revenue there. He joined there in March 1979, but as the luck would have it, when in July 1979 the District got split into two, Ved Parkash was transferred along with his post and posted as first Assistant Commissioner Revenue of the newly created District Kargil, where he remained posted for a full term of two years. In respect of the period, Ved Parkash remained posted at Kargil, he once recounted an event, which according to him was a memorable and wonderful experience. The occasion was the Parliamentary Elections, and while Dr Bloeria was the Returning Officer for the Ladakh Constituency, Ved Parkash was the Assistant Returning Officer for Kargil segment of the Constituency. As per scheduled programme, counting of votes for the two segments of Leh and Kargil was simultaneously conducted at Leh and Kargil respectively. On the fixed day, but before starting the process of counting for the Kargil segment, it was brought to the notice of Ved Parkash, the Assistant Returning Officer, that two of the Presiding Officers of the segment had committed certain insignificant mistake while preparing election documents at the close of polling. The issue was discussed among a few

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seasoned officers connected with the process and it was observed that the mistakes were of a technical nature and would not in any way affect the results. But after all a mistake is a mistake, and in the election fever, representatives of political parties, particularly those belonging to opposition groups always remain in search of such an issue, just for the sake of making hue and cry. So, a strategy was worked out, and one of the trusted officers, who volunteered himself for the task, was entrusted the responsibility to handle the problem. As per strategy, the designated officer took his Counting Assistants into confidence, and disclosed to them that during the process of counting, occasionally he would pose to behave rudely on minor issues in order to prove him to be fair enough; and that way representatives of Political parties would remain confident of no hanky-panky. That way when it became sure that the officer had succeeded in establishing his faith, in line with the pre-decided plan, the marked Ballot Boxes were sent to that Table and opened in an atmosphere of good faith in such a manner that the mistake went un-noticed. This way the counting of ballot papers concluded without any hurdle. The counting results of the segment complied at Kargil were required to be delivered in the office of Returning Officer at Leh, so Ved Parkash accompanied by three other officials left for Leh in a Government Vehicle. It was snowing heavily throughout the whole route and at places it was very difficult to even identify the road. But not bothering about the consequences, braving the difficulties and struggling throughout, the team reached Leh by 11 P.M. Next morning when the incident came to the notice of Dr Bloeria, the Returning Officer, he contacted Ved Parkash Gupta and said, "You deserve a 'Gold Medal' for the journey under taken even at the risk of your life", and to that Ved Parkash is said to have replied, "If madness in braving difficulties attracts prize, then yes, I deserve".

Thereafter, when Dr Bloeria was posted as Director Food and Supplies Department Jammu, he got Ved Parkash posted with him as Deputy Director, and assigned him the most important branch of the Departement.

From the above narrative it is found that Ved Parkash Gupta had enjoyed the confidence of Dr. Sudhir S Bloeria on four different occasions i.e. when the former was posted as Assistant Commissioner Nazool Jammu, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Leh (ladakh), Assistant Commissioner Revenue Kargil and then Deputy Director Food and Supplies Department Jammu. And at least on two occasions Dr Boleria got posting of Ved Parkash with him by approaching appropriate authorities. That in itself shows how much trust the former had on the latter and that

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goes to the credit of Shri Ved Parkash. Their official relations later developed into personal equation and one would wonder to know what sort of mutual respect they have and above all both often still call on each other.

At the fag end of his service career, Ved Parkash was posted as Administrative Officer in the office of Financial Commissioner (Revenue) - R. K. Takkar, the first, I.A.S. officer posted in the Jammu and Kashmir State, whom Ved Parkash would described as a brilliant, sharp and cool-headed officer. Besides, he has termed the period of service with the latter as highly enjoyable, mostly because of his fatherly behaviour with the subordinates. According to Ved Parkash, Shri Takkar would always feel concerned about well being of his subordinates. Since those days the Financial Commissioner used to be essential part of all Selection Committees especially those concerning senior level functionaries; once he told Ved Parkash that process of grant of promotion to the next higher post/scale would be finalised well before retirement of the latter. But unfortunately, due to certain internal problems best known to the authorities of the time, the matter got prolonged for more than a year. In the meantime, Ved Parkash superannuated on 30th October 1985 (Those days a State Government employ would get superannuated at the age of 55 years), and Shri Takkar had also become the Chief Secretary of the State. As courtesy demanded, Ved Parkas Gupta called on the Chief Secretary on the date of his superannuation. When the latter came to know that orders for grant of higher scale had not been issued, he felt sad expressing that he was not in know of the reasons for delay. However, within two weeks' time, of course definitely with the intervention of Chief Secretary, the order was issued, and although Ved Parkash got all pecuniary benefits post retirement, yet he remained debarred from the benefit of higher post, and that episode at fag end of his service career left a sad impression on his mind. He would often feel relieved by expressing, "I am sure I have suffered for not having cordial relations with 'Political Bosses', for which I have no apology no regrets."

Shri Ved Parkash is enjoying his retired life happily, surrounded by his loved ones and only two years ago he has been blessed with a charming great-grandson, which happiness, in the present times, when marriages are being solemnised at very advanced age, is a rare gift from the God. May be that is His way of rewarding a life lived with uprightness and rectitude.



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TALES AND ANECDOTES

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TALES AND ANECDOTES

1. **A very senior retired I.A.S. officer of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre reminiscences two important events as under :**

   i. Upon his posting as Deputy Commissioner Jammu, after taking over charge, he called on the then Divisional Commissioner Jammu, S. Sohan Singh — another old stalwart of the Revenue Department— in his office chamber, on a courtesy visit. The later welcomed him and as usual showered elderly advises. Late in the evening he received a telephone call (those old days land line telephone used to be the only source of communication) from the Divisional Commissioner informing that he would be quite busy during next three days and may not be available for any guidance or advice. "You being new to the District, in case you find wanting in consulting me on some important issue, take your own decision; and if someone asks tell him that you have authority from the Divisional Commissioner." It was almost a blank cheque; something very rare.

   ii. Mirza Afzal Beg, the then Revenue Minister of the State, once called him (the Deputy Commissioner) in his office chamber in new Secretariat Jammu, and advised to supersede a particular Panchayat. The Deputy Commissioner dared a reply that, in his opinion, he was not authorised to take the desired action, rather Secretary Agriculture was competent to do so. Initially the Minister did not feel comfortable; but after he consulted the relevant law and found the reply correct, he asked the Deputy Commissioner to go. However, later on the Minister called the Deputy Commissioner back, and thanked him for apprising him of the correct position as also saving him from taking a wrong decision.

2. **Shri Pradeep Gupta :** A 1977 batch K.A.S. Officer who joined as Tehsildar in Revenue Department and retired on 31st July 2013 as Divisional Commissioner Jammu in I.A.S cadre. Besides his postings in

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Revenue Department on various assignments including Deputy Commissioner of an important District Kathua, he had occasions to work with at least two erstwhile Chief Ministers including Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah, as also with a number of Chief Secretaries of the State as senior Staff Officer. He has described a memorable event of his life; which, in his own words, is narrated as under:

"My father worked as Private Secretary with Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah during his 2nd tenure as Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir from 1975 till his death on 8th September 1982. Once, as per routine when I visited the Kashmir House on the fateful day on 26th March, 1977, I found the place deserted. I rushed to my father's room to enquire why it was so. It appeared that there had been fast moving political developments the previous day. Sheikh Sahib had got whiff of a move in the Congress party to withdraw support to his Government and stake claim to form their own Government. The wily Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah had outsmarted his opponents by recommending dissolution of the State Assembly. The Governor, Laxmi Kant Jha, accepted his advice, dissolved the Assembly and ordered midterm elections. With the dissolving of the Assembly, Sheikh Sahib ceased to be the Chief Minister, but after Elections he returned with a thumping majority in July, 1977.

"Sensing that the lull in Kashmir House would be the best time to meet Sheikh Sahib; I pleaded with my father to let me meet him. After apprising Sheikh Sahib of my keenness to meet him, he ushered me to his room. Sheikh Sahib was seated on a sofa and by his side sat the late Shri Shamim Ahmed Shamim, then a Member of Parliament, a satirist and the person possessing sharp wit. I was both excited and nervous. Sheikh Sahib perhaps realising my predicament gave me a warm hug, which restored my confidence. He asked me what I was doing in Delhi University and what I proposed to do in life. I informed him that I was pursuing a course in M.Sc. (Physics) and added that if I were to receive his blessings I would contest coming election to the State Assembly! Sheikh Sahib did not hide his disappointment at my response and advised that I should rather aspire to be a scientist. I was completely crest fallen. All my hopes of becoming an MLA and even a Minister were completely dashed!! Shamim-Ahmad-Shamim, however, came to my rescue by countering Sheikh Sahib by asking why he had devoted his whole life in pursuing a political struggle when he was himself an M.Sc. in Chemistry. Sheikh Sahib did not respond and seemed to be in deep thought perhaps recounting and reflecting upon the events since 1931 when he had launched a

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struggle for the rights of oppressed sections of society. I quietly withdrew from the room.

"There was another chance encounter with Sheikh Sahib in my father's room in the Civil Secretariat at Jammu in the year 1981. He had abruptly entered the room and enquired from each one of us, why we were there. When he questioned me, my father interjected that I was his son. 'Oh, MLA Sahib Kaisey Ho' he said to me. I sheepishly informed him that I had joined the Kashmir Administrative Service and was currently posted as a Tehsildar. There was a spontaneous remark from Sheikh Sahib, "Achha, Logon Se Murge Mat Lena". I would never do that I responded solemnly, and have kept the promise to date."

3. **Shri S.A.S. Qadiri a senior bureaucrat of the State, who held the post of Financial Commissioner before his deputation to the Central Government from where he retired, had shared a story in a meeting, and same retold by Pt. Sain Dass a retired senior Revenue Officer as follows;**

"In a village in Kashmir Valley, once there arose a dispute about utilisation of water from a natural source located in that particular village. On account of shortage of water in an adjoining village, it was proposed to divert water from that source, but the villagers resisted and did not allow the Government officials to carry out work on the project. In order to get the problem sorted out concerned Department raised the level, and in the process, matter reached the Chief Minister; who in turn asked the then Divisional Commissioner (S.A.S. Qadiri) to get the issue resolved. The Divisional Commissioner visited the spot and while holding an open 'Public Durbar', he tried to persuade the villagers to allow the proposed diversion of some part of the water. People present there offered different views; while some were totally against the proposal and some were agreeable subject to certain conditions. But lastly an elderly person got up and sought permission to express his views. When allowed, he said, "Mie Bap, the water has been given to our village from the times of our ancestors by Lawrence Sahib (the famous British officer, who became popular in Kashmir for his contributions in carrying forward land Settlement in Valley); so it cannot be allowed to be diverted". (Translated from Kashmiri). Thereupon, Revenue record was consulted, which revealed that in 'Wajab-ul-Arz' forming part of Record-of-Rights of the village, it was mentioned that residents of the village shall have exclusive right over water of that particular source. The higher

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authorities were, therefore, informed accordingly and the project for diversion of water came to be shelved."

4. **Shri Dwarka Nath Sharma:** Born on 01-05-1938, Shri Dwarka Nath Sharma Graduated in the year 1959 from Government Gandhi Memorial Arts College Jammu. His father late Shri Behari Lal Sharma belonged to village Rari of new Tehsil Ramgarh, new District Samba. He was working as Labourer Contractor for arranging loading and unloading of Government ration supplies at Jammu. When Dwarka Nath passed his B.A., his father approached one of his close friends - a senior officer in Police Department, who managed to get Dwarka Nath appointed as Sub-Inspector Police (trainee). Shri Behari Lal Sharma had a joint family comprising three brothers and one sister, who after her husband died at a quite early age, was also putting up with them since her widowhood. In fact, she functioned as head of the family and her writ ran in the house with no questions asked. The day Dwarka Nath got appointment letter, his father took a box of sweets and presented to his sister as a mark of respect to her while breaking the good news about appointment of Dwarka Nath. On hearing that Dwarka Nath had got appointment in Police Department and that too in officer's cadre, instead of being happy, she expressed annoyance and commanded that Dwarka Nath would not serve in Police Department. For three days there remained a stalemate, and when all efforts to persuade her failed, Dwarka Nath had to leave the job, while he was going through the process of being sent to Police Training Institute Phillaur (Punjab).

   Thereafter, father of Dwarka Nath again approached some other acquaintances - senior functionaries in Government set up, and managed his selection as a Naib Tehsildar candidate. Aunt of Dwarka Nath did not have any objection in that assignment; rather the house was in a festive mood for quite a few days. Accordingly, Dwarka Nath after receiving training in Revenue, at Revenue Training Institute Jammu and attending three months course in Weights and Measures at Bombay (now Mumbai) joined the State Government service on 09-01-1961 initially in Weights and Measures Department and after few years adjusted in Revenue Department; where after serving in various capacities as Naib Tehsildar, Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms, Territorial Tehsildar, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, and Collector Land Acquisition etc. finally he retired as Deputy Commissioner Relief (Migrants) Organisation Jammu on 30-04-1996.

5. **Shri Harbans Lal :** K. A. S. Officer of 1977 batch who was initially

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appointed as Deputy Registrar in the State Co-operative Department, but later posted in Revenue Department; where he got opportunities to work in various capacities, such as Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms as also Territorial Tehsildar in a number of Tehsils of Jammu Division including important Tehsils of R.S. Pura, Akhnoor and Jammu, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Officer on Special Duty with Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Collector Land Acquisition, Additional Deputy Commissioner Udhampur etc. and finally retired as Director Land Records Jammu on 31st December 2003. He has shared an event concerning his ambition to become Tehsildar and achieving the same, in his own words, as follows;

"I was born in a remote village Bakore of Chhamb-Jourian sector presently forming part of new Tehsil Jourian, District Jammu. My family belonged to agriculturist class with sole source of lively hood as agriculture. Village Bakore being headquarter of the Patwar Halqua, there was a lot of footfall of people belonging to agriculturist class visiting the Patwari in connection with their day today problems. In my childhood I have observed village folk exhibiting great respect for the Patwari Halqua, the Girdawar Qanungo and other Revenue Officers.

"When I did my Graduation in the year 1969 from Jammu University, my late father approached the then Tehsil President of the ruling Party, who happened to be the sitting M.L.C as well; and requested him that his son having done the Graduation may be got provided with some suitable Government service. The Politician very curtly replied, "Should your son be appointed as Tehsildar?" My late father returned home quite disappointed and shared the happening with me. This taunting behaviour of the Politician had a very shaking effect on me, but at the same time led me to think over it, and to work hard in order to fulfil the cherished desire of my father to see me as Tehsildar. Thus, I prepared for appearing in the competitive examination, appeared in K.A.S. examination held in the year 1977, and with the blessings of my parents and of course the grace of Almighty the God succeeded in the very first attempt."

6. **Shri Ved Parkash Gupta:** Born on April 14, 1937, Shri Ved Parkash Gupta belongs to the famous town of Udhampur. After doing his Graduation from G.G.M Science College Jammu in the year 1957, he became part of the Naib Tehsildar candidates of 1959 batch. After serving the Revenue Department in various capacities, such as Naib Tehsildar, Tehsildar Agrarian Reforms, Territorial Tehsildar, Assistant

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Commissioner Revenue and Collector Land Acquisition for an important Project of extension of Railways to Udhampur etc., he retired from the post of Assistant Settlement Commissioner in the office of Financial Commissioner Revenue on 30th April 1995. Once, in early seventies of the past century, while he was posted as Tehsildar Nazool Jammu, he received a strange guest in his office chamber, while the author of the book was also sitting there. He (name forgotten) was a professional fortune-teller, and was often seen moving around in Government offices in search of clients. He possessed a number of recommendatory letters in praise of his art of fortune telling. In fact, he had come to Nazool office in connection with some pending case for regularisation of land under his occupation. When he enquired about the status of his case, Ved Parkash asked him to tell something about his future. He took out his brass squares jointed with cotton thread from his bag, murmured some mantra and threw it on the table. After observing the dots engraved on top side of brass squares, he made some quick calculations, and very confidently said in Punjabi, "Dharti Hil Gedi Hai", which in other words meant that he (the Tehsildar) is under transfer. Shri Ved Parksh out rightly rejected the prediction saying, "I have been on the present assignment for around a year only; besides, that post being not so important, nobody would like to shift me from here." But hardly a fortnight passed when general transfer orders of Tehsildars were issued from the Revenue Secretariat; Ved Parksh was one among the transferees having been posted as Tehsildar Zanskar (Ladakh). Incidentally, under the same order the author was also posted as Tehsildar Leh (Ladakh), although in his case it was transfer on his own request. On issuance of the order, Ved Parkash became a bit upset, as during those old days posting to Zanskar was termed as the worst posting. Everybody he met expressed bad feeling and sympathy for his posting at a far-flung place. Winter season was going to start shortly, and he had certain problems including keeping his family back. Even his family members did not want him to join new place of posting and instead counselled to proceed on leave. Therefore, he proceeded to Srinagar, and tried his best to approach higher authorities for modification of the order. But, eventually when all his efforts failed, one fine morning he boarded a J & K State Roadways Transport Corporation Bus from Srinagar for Kargil, where he reached in the evening. At that time Kargil was the Sub-divisional headquarter of the erestwhile combined District of Ladakh; with Zanskar as one of its Tehsils.

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Next day he reported to the S.D.M. At that time Dr. Sudhir S Bloeria, I.A.S. was the incumbent S.D.M., who on entry of the guest instantly enquired, "do you recognise me?" At first, he was taken aback, but immediately he had a flashback that they had earlier met somewhere. Suddenly he recalled that when he was posted as Naib Tehsildar at Niabat Majalta (now a Tehsil) of District Udhampur, Dr. Bloeria had once visited his area on an official tour during his District assignment as I.A.S. probationer. In fact, at that time Dr. Bloeria was clean shaven, whereas now he had been maintaining a beard, which came in way of his immediate recognising Dr. Bloeria. Anyhow, Dr. Bloeria welcomed Ved Parkash to his Sub-division, but the latter expressed his least interest in continuing at the place of posting, rather added that he intends to proceed on long leave. Dr Bloeria invited him for a dinner at his official residence and added that rest they would discuss in the evening. When they met for dinner, Dr. Bloeria consoled, rather encouraged, boosted the morale and persuaded Ved Parkash to join his place of posting. At the same time, he assured Ved Parkash that after few days of the latter's joining, he would visit Padam the headquarter of Zanskar Tehsil, stay there for a day or two and see that the latter would be comfortable in every respect. Additionally, he called the Naib Tehsildar Kargil - a local guy-, asked him to accompany Ved Parkash up to the point from where the limit of Zanskar Tehsil starts. Those old days, but for a jeep road up to around forty or so Kilometers, rest of the journey was to be under taken on horseback or on foot to be covered in a minimum period of six days. For rest of the story it would be appropriate to narrate the same in the words of Shri Ved Parkash as follows;

"The other day we were dropped by jeep up to the point jeep road existed and thereafter we started onward journey. It was a horrible experience travelling, for the first time, in a quite inhospitable surrounding mostly bereft of greenery and very scantly populated. But quite refreshingly and surprisingly, the people were found most hospitable and respectful, which, of course, made the harsh journey somewhat relaxing. After we reached the starting point of Tehsil Zanskar, the Naib Tehsidar Kargil handed me over to a Lama (Buddhist Monk), and returned back to his headquarter, asking his peon to accompany me for further journey. Braving all odds, we reached in the evening at Rangdoom Gumpa (Buddhist Place of worship), which fell within Teshil Zanskar. There we stayed for the night and people in the Gumpa saw to it that my stay was comfortable to their best. Next morning the Head Lama arranged a horse and also deputed a Lama to

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accompany me up to Tehsil headquarters. Before starting the journey, the peon of Niabat Kargil sought permission to go back, and despite my insistence did not agree to accompany for further journey, which once again dampened my spirits. Anyhow, we proceeded for onward journey and in the evening reached a place where the Assistant Engineer looking after construction of road to Zanskar had been camping; although he himself was not available at the time we reached there. I was feeling quite tired due to full day long journey on horseback, so taking liberty, I took some light meals and fell asleep as soon as I went to bed. The next morning when I woke up I met the Engineer (H.K.Gandotra), who incidentally was found to be an old acquaintance. He too expressed hardships being faced by him, but consoled me by adding that Zanskar is, of course, a good place. Taking leave of him we again started for onward journey, and bracing odds, after three days reached village Karsha, where the Naib Tehsildar Zanskar (a local guy) resided. Spent the night there and next day reached Padam, the Tehsil headquarter. Seven day long arduous journey, mostly on horseback, left me totally a broken person, so for a few days I was almost in a resting mode.

"Although it is very difficult to narrate in detail the hardships I had to face during the seven-day long journey in a difficult and different terrain, and that too after the gap of a period as long as more than forty-four years, yet sharing of one incident, which was not less than a nightmare for me would be necessary. During almost middle of the journey, it started heavily snowing and we had to take shelter in a dingy cave like place, as there was no other place nearby. We had with us some cooked meals and some raw meat. Since there could not be arranged any cooking medium, so, in the evening we consumed the cooked stuff. Snow fall did not halt even the next morning; therefore, members of the accompanying party, in order to satisfy their hunger consumed the meat in raw form itself. They did offer the same to me as well, but being not accustomed to eat raw meat, I declined. But that led to me a thought that since nothing had been left to eat, and in case we continue to stay further; they may not hesitate to kill me to satisfy their appetite. The idea although, now may seem unfounded, shook my spirits and in a fury of anxiety I ordered to move immediately. As the snow fall was still on, other members tried to persuade me to wait till at least snow fall stopped, but I did not budge. We packed up and moved out for the next destination. Surprisingly, the proverb, "God helps those who help themselves" proved to be

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true, as after around an hour of journey, weather suddenly became favourable; snow fall stopped and it turned to be a sunny day.

"Hardly had I started my routine office work in Padam, when I received a wireless message (the only mean of communication available at that place those days) conveying tour programme of the S.D.M. Kargil for his visit to Zanskar. After going through the contents of the message, I recalled the discussion we had during dinner at the residence of Dr Bloeria referred to earlier as well. At that time, I had thought that Dr Bloeria had mentioned about his visit to Zanskar, just in order to keep my morale up. But the message washed away my unfounded misunderstanding of his intension; he actually stood to his words and that really had a very encouraging impact on my thinking process as well as future working there.

"On the scheduled day and time, I received Dr Bloeria at entry point of my Tehsil and accompanied him up to Padam. After enjoying reception from the locals and having rest for the night, next day a meeting of all the Tehsil level officers was convened wherein the S.D.M reviewed, working and performance of each officer. During the course of the review it came to his notice that the Block Development Officer had withdrawn certain amount for construction of a Panchyat Ghar, but the building had not been constructed. Taking serious view of the matter Dr Bloeria ordered placing the officer under suspension, simultaneously asking me to flash a wireless message to the Development Commissioner Leh for confirming the action. In the evening a deputation of local elders and the Naib Tehsildar, again a local of the area, along with the B.D.O. came to me and requested to persuade the S.D.M not to go for suspension of the officer, as according to them the officer could not take up wok on account of certain technical issue; otherwise the officer is well intentioned and the money is lying with him intact. Although, initially I tried to convince them that the S.D.M. is very strict and would not agree to take his order back, but on their forceful pleas, I approached Dr Bloeria and conveyed the sentiments of the deputation. At the same time, I added that since I had joined quite recently, such a drastic action would send a wrong message to the public against me; I also informed that the wireless message desired to be sent to the Development Commissioner had not been yet sent. My pleading appealed him and he agreed to withhold his order on the explicit condition that Tehsildar would ensure construction of the Panchyat Ghar within a specified period of time. I took the responsibility and later also saw to it that the promise is fulfilled. This way, the action of

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Dr Bloeria helped in boosting my morale as also enhancing my prestige and dignity.

"On the next day the S.D.M. left for a visit of some interior villages. On the way we were required to cross via a hanging bridge over river Zanskar. Dr Bloeria took no time in crossing the river via the hanging bridge and asked me to follow him. I had not faced such a situation earlier and was a bit reluctant. But Dr Bloeria encouraged me and taking risk of my life, for the first time, took courage and crossed the river using the dangerous mode. After reaching other side of the bridge, I felt a sense of confidence to have been instilled in me, but that could be possible only due to the motivation and encouragement provided by Dr Bloeria, which quality is possessed by very rare officers."

Another event shared by Ved Parkash pertains to year 1983 when he was posted as Tehsildar Koteranka of District Rajouri. In the initial months of his posting over there, one day during the course of hearing court cases, on perusal of a file as also revealed by the parties present in the court, it was observed that it was a simple case of implementation of order passed by subordinate Civil Court finally upheld by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir. In order to fully understand the matter, it would be appropriate to know at least brief history of the case, which is as under;

There was a Muslim land lord and an ex-Zaildar, who had vast agricultural property. Despite leading happy married life, he contracted another marriage. But his first wife being a strong woman did not allow the other lady to enter the house. Therefore, the ex-Zaildar built a small house at some other location and kept the 2nd wife there. In this way he carried on with both the wives for many years handling every situation quite tactfully, but control over major portion of the property continued with first wife. After the death of ex-Zaildar, the 2nd wife started claiming adequate share in the property left by her late husband. When her local efforts did not succeed, she started knocking doors of Courts, and in the process the matter went up to the High Court. In fact, her right to property was recognised by subordinate Civil Courts and the same had been finally up held by the highest court as well. Therefore, the Revenue authorities were simply required to facilitate division of property and put the parties in possession thereof in accordance with spirit of the orders of the Civil Courts. As against it, since first wife of ex-Zaildar

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was an influential lady, the case was being adjourned to next date(s) for the last around two years on one ground or the other.

Now, after understanding the whole situation, in the first instance Shri Ved Parkash identified the parties and turned out others (Including a Nambardar) who had come just to support the influential lady (first wife). Thereafter, he enquired from the parties, present in the court, the reasons for not having implemented the order, and if any party had challenged the final verdict? Finding no reasonable response, he announced that since it was a dispute between family members, he would allow them some time to sort out the same amicably among themselves; otherwise subordinate Revenue officials shall enforce the same strictly as per Court verdict and adjourned the case with these directions. On the next date of hearing when it was reported that nothing has moved forward, direction was passed to subordinate Revenue officials to proceed on spot and act strictly as per final order of the competent Civil Court in the matter. Within three days of passing the direction, a compliance report was received in Tehsil office. With this, the matter came to an end and the file consigned to records.

After few days the beneficiary (2nd wife of ex-Zaildar) came to Tehsil office and thanked the Tehsildar for relieving her of the agony having been perpetuated by her opponent (1st wife of ex-Zaildar). But above all the action of the Tehsildar sent a strong message among the masses that he means business, and the same helped in carrying out his duties and responsibilities quite smoothly for rest of the period of his stay at Kotranka; otherwise a tough station.



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THE CONCLUSION

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THE CONCLUSION

This compilation does not represent the viewpoints of only those who have taken pains to contribute by sharing their life time experiences. It also represents a feeling of general masses including, of course, those who have remained part of or in some way associated with Revenue Department in the past. The book is intended to serve as a reminder to those at the helm of affairs that it is high time to take appropriate steps to improve working of the Revenue Department with a view to ensure that not only glory of the Department is restored, but the people, particularly the rural masses for whose service the Department is actually meant for, are benefitted in real sense. There were times when people would come to a Revenue Officer for getting redressed their genuine problems of all sorts, treating him as 'Mie-Bap' (Mother-Father) and not just as a Hakim (Administrator). There is no denying the fact that in times of yore, occasionally, actions of Revenue Officers would look quite harsh, but every step initiated with public good in mind as upper most would always be appreciated and would lead to a positive ending. Thus, there is need to create such an atmosphere in the field so as to win back public faith, and re-establish 'Mai-Bap' relationship between the public and a Revenue Officer; not in the sense of helplessness but mutual regard and respect for each other. Besides, sincere and concerted efforts are required to be made in order to ensure that Revenue records are up dated, at least, as per norms prescribed under various 'Standing Orders'; lest, one day the situation may become out of control. I have a feeling, which of course, I have expressed on many occasions that fortunately for the Department the majority of the rural masses is not educated so as to know; what is the present status of our Revenue records for want of regular updating? I have a genuine fear that the day, 'cat is out of the bag', there may be a chaos. The views expressed in the book are not imaginary or based on unfounded information, but represent practical realities on ground. It may be quite relevant to add that there might have been something like that in back of the mind of authorities, when the Government in Revenue Department notified 'Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP) vide Circular instructions issued under No: 01/Rev/(NG) of 2015 dated 30-10-2015,

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which was followed by another circular issued under No: 01-Rev (NG) of 2016 dated 26-05-2016 for purpose of bringing improvement in the poor performance of the field functionaries of the Revenue Department. Not satisfied by the pace of desired results, the Revenue Department, vide Government order No: 146-Rev (Vig.) of 2018 dated 08-08-2018 constituted a high-level Committee headed by Financial Commissioner (Revenue) for evolving a Standard Operating Procedure to address the issues, so as to ensure transparency in the delivery of public services coupled with overall improvement in the functioning of the Revenue Administration in the State. But it is felt that much more is needed to be done.

In this context, besides identifying remedial steps which are required to be taken at various levels, in order to ensure that the lost glory of the Department is restored; there is a need to analyse as to what has been the causes for decline, and where it has gone wrong? Accordingly, in the backdrop of viewpoints expressed by various experienced and retired Revenue Officers and the general feedback on the subject, issues enumerated and discussed hereunder take the front seat.

I. Maintenance of Revenue Records: As per guidelines contained in Standing Orders No: 22 and 23-B, it is incumbent upon the Revenue officials to conduct periodical Girdawari (crop inspection), and update Jamabandi (Annual Record) of each village after every four years. There is genuine feeling that neither Girdawari is being conducted strictly as per the instructions nor Jamabandis are being updated as per prescribed schedule. For instance, Girdawari, if at all conducted, does not reflect ground position so far as the cultivating possession is concerned; there seems to be some confusion among the field staff in the backdrop of certain circular instructions. The issue needs to be reviewed at the level of competent authority and appropriate clarification issued. Similarly, a special campaign is required to be undertaken for preparation of Jamabandis in respect of those villages which have remained unattended for decades together; and in future calendar for preparation of Jamabandis should be followed and monitored religiously. At the same time work concerning attestation of mutations needs be undertaken and monitored in accordance with guidelines contained in Standing Order No: 23-A. Importance of attestation of mutation work in the times of yore can be well adjudged by 'Ailan No: 38 of 1976(samvat) dated 30th Phagun 1976(samvat), (roughly February 1920 - exactly a century ago) by virtue of which the then Naib Tehsildar Uri namely, Samsar Chand was stepped down by one step in gradation list, on account of not improving his performance singularly in the matter of attestation of mutations.

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Interestingly, the order was issued by none other than the Masheer-e-Mal (Revenue Minister), and the same was specifically desired to be published in the State Gazette for information of all Revenue Officers. This type of monitoring and awarding punishment to such of the Revenue officers as were found lacking in clearing backlog of pending mutations and other departmental tasks; used to be a regular practice till few decades ago; which now seems to have been abandoned.

II. Strengthening and revival of the status of certain departmental institutions: Institutions like Financial Commissioner (Revenue), Assistant Commissioner (Revenue), Sadar Qanungo and Office Qanungo have, in the past, played very crucial role in smooth and systematic functioning of the Department, but of late these institutions seem to have taken back seat. Steps need be taken to revive, empower and fully utilise these institutions as per duties assigned by virtue of various statues. In this context it will be in place to add that long back, only experienced persons used to be posted as Sadar Qanungo, and the post used to carry higher status than that of Girdawar. For instance, an order issued by the then Revenue Minister dated 23rd May 1922, published in Government Gazette dated 12thJune 1922 reads, "In future, no one should be appointed Sadar Qanungo, who has not been a Girdawar Qanungo as well as an Office Qanungo, at least three years on each of these posts.

(Exception– A Naib Tehsildar may be recommended for the post of Sadar Qanungo)".

Similarly, in the 'Rules Regarding Classification and the Method of Recruitment to Superior Non-gazetted Services', sanctioned vide Order No: 29-C of 1942 dated 7th January 1942, while the post of Senior Girdawar carried the pay scale of 25-2-55, the post of Sadar Qanungo had the pay scale of 40-2-60. Besides, the method of recruitment for the post of Sadar Qanungo, prescribed under said 'Rules' was, "Promotion by selection from Senior Girdawars". But now-a-days Sadar Qanungo and Girdawar Qanungo are in the same pay scale and any Girdawar is just posted as Sadar Qanungo in routine, without following any such norms as used to be applicable in the past.

III. Policy for posting and transfer of personnel in the Revenue Department right from Patwari to the Financial Commissioner: In the first instance, there needs to be in place a special set up to consider and propose suitable personnel for posting as Financial Commissioner (Revenue), Joint Financial Commissioner, Settlement Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner (Revenue), Sadar Qanungo and Office Qanungo. These assignments need be declared as special category (technical) posts,

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and only those who qualify as per prescribed norms be considered to be posted; posting against these assignments in routine is not going to give desired results. Financial Commissioner (Revenue) being head of the Department needs be allowed to affect transfers of personnel up to the level of Tehsildar; which concept is not new to the Department. In this context it would be relevant to point out that in pursuance of Regulation No: 5 of 1994 (samvat), for the first time, a post of 'Revenue Commissioner' was added in the category of Revenue officers (as specified under Land Revenue Regulation No: I of 1980-samvat) to head the Department at State level. Vide Order No: 1049-C of 1937(A.D.) dated 28th December 1937 powers of the 'Revenue Commissioner' were specified, item 8 of which reads, **"to transfer all officers below the rank of Wazir Wazarat including such employees in the frontier as may not have completed the full term of three years' frontier duty."** Even afterwards when the post came to be designated as Financial Commissioner he used to exercise such powers for long time, but of late transfer orders of Tehsildars are being issued by the Revenue Secretariat. This certainly needs a review.

So far as transfers of Patwaris and Girdawars are concerned, those should be ordered as per delegation, and no higher authority should exercise powers of his subordinate but for certain exceptional cases of extra-ordinary nature; and at District level, Sadar Qanungo through the Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) should be the nodal agency in all matters related to Revenue work and Revenue staff.

IV. Trainings: Training, initial as well as in service, is very important component of successful career of a Government employee. Primary objective of trainings is to hone the skills of Revenue Officers in Revenue laws and procedures as also to provide opportunity to expand their knowledge base. In short it is a process of enhancing capabilities of workers for doing a particular job and molding their thinking, leading to quality performance.

In the past, this aspect seems to have been given top priority, and very detailed provisions were in position. In this context following are cited as important references.

i. In 1941 (A.D.) Maharaja's Government sanctioned rules for the training of candidates for the executive branch of the Civil Service, commonly known as K.C.S Civil, which provided;

"The course of the period of training will ordinarily be two years. The first year will be devoted to receiving Revenue, Settlement and Judicial training according to a prescribed programme and the second year to the

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actual performance of the full duties of a Naib Tehsildar. The programme of Revenue and Settlement will include different branches of work done by a Patwari, a Girdawar and a Naib Tehsildar. This will ordinarily take a month and will be followed by two months' work in a Tehsil office. As for Judicial training, a candidate will be required to watch the proceedings in a court, take notes of the evidence produced and the argument advanced. They will write judgements in the cases heard before them. After completing training in Revenue, Settlement and Judicial work, a candidate will be posted as Naib Tehsildar and work as such for a period of one year."

ii. Excerpts from the book, 'Commitment My Style' by Shri E.N. Mangat Rai, I.C.S. reproduced as under:

Page 44-45: *"The Punjab Government prescribed 18 months' training for an Assistant Commissioner. Of this one year was in an ordinary District, and six months directed to more intensive revenue work in District training - EMPHASIS ON THE VILLAGE - under land settlement which meant harder, more complicated work. During the year's training in general administration a young officer carried some load of individual responsibility. For example, he started as a Magistrate class III going on to class II after six months, and decided cases at this level. He was also, on the revenue side, a class IV Collector, going on to class III and so on. But the primary objective was to get him thoroughly acquainted with villages, and the administrative structure dealing with matters connected with land, irrigation, Government loans etc., and to give him a working knowledge of the relationships between various branches of government at District headquarters ..... The system was so enforced and watched that there was no escape whatever from acquiring a knowledge of village conditions and how best to deal with them."*

Page 60: *"Settlement training was directed at achieving a mastery of detail of the revenue administration, and we were each allotted an "assessment circle" of about 40 to 50 contiguous villages, where we were required to do the work of a Patwari upwards to a Collector, and thereafter prepare a revenue assessment of the area."*

More importantly, the work of trainees was vigorously monitored by higher officers, and as a supporting reference following excerpt from the above cited book stand good testimony.

Page 44-45: *"Diaries had to be maintained and were scrutinized and commented on, not always kindly, by the Deputy Commissioner and his superior, the Commissioner."*

Page 65: *"With reference to your letter No...., I am directed to return the Assessment Report, Village Inspection notes, Economic Survey,*

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and other revenue papers prepared by Mr. E.N. Mangat Rai I.C.S., Assistant Commissioner during the course of his Settlement training, and to inform you that the Financial Commissioner agree that the work of this officer is of a very high standard all round, both as regards accuracy and reasoning. He has done well in famine too and exhibited the same qualities of detailed care and sympathy. His name will in due course be considered when appointments such as those of Assistant Settlement Officer are to be filled."

iii. As per posts available on internet, Punjab Revenue Department is often facilitating series of capacity building programs; excerpts from one such post are reproduced hereunder: -

"To hone the skills of Revenue Officers in Revenue laws and procedures, Punjab Revenue Department will facilitate a series of capacity building programs for them, Financial Commissioner Revenue....., said.

"The first in the series is a Special One Day Session on passing "Speaking Orders" slated for January 15 in MGSIPA campus. As many as 50 IAS and PCS Officers are expected to join the session, ...

"The subjects being handled by Revenue Officers are legal and complex. They involve legal nuances and awareness of various pronouncements. So, this session may amount to reducing appellate work and lessening the element of arbitrariness in the court proceedings.

"The orders passed by the Revenue Officers are expected to be detailed orders citing merits and demerits of the case; the verdict is expected to be the outcome of proper weighing of pros & cons, it must "stand up to the test of judicial scrutiny, added NS Sangha,. ..... .

"Further, in the itinerary of the Revenue Department is a Special two-week capacity building programs for the District Revenue Officers. They would be developed as Master Trainers for their subordinates and cascade their experiences to Naib Tehsildars, who in turn will train the Kanungos. Similar refresher course would be facilitated jointly by academicians and practitioners. ..... .

"Patwaris are the backbone of Revenue Department. This rigorous training before they commence work as regular Patwaris would go a long way in strengthening the department."

Besides, the Punjab Land Administration Manual provides, **"Every Patwari will be required to undergo a Refresher Course in the specified subjects which shall be conducted by the Director Land Records, Punjab, from time to time".** The rule further provides that the

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Refresher Course shall be conducted for imparting training to senior most Patwaris eligible for promotion, and that the course with duration of two weeks shall comprise lecture and discussion sessions. Similarly, Rule 239 of the said Manual reads, **"Any Naib Tehsildar who has passed the Tehsildar's examination may be sent for a year's training in a District to undergo the practical training in Revenue work prescribed by paragraph 7 of Financial Commissioner's Standing Order No: 12 of the Haryana (Group B) Service Rules 1988."**

It is felt that training programs applicable at present in Jammu and Kashmir are deficient in many aspects, viz-a-viz those highlighted here in above. Therefore, in order to ensure availability of better, skilled, and well-trained officers and officials in the Department, there is need to review and upgrade the existing Training set up.

V. Issuance of various certificates like, earlier PRC and now Domicile Certificate, OBC and SC Certificates, Gun Licenses and Fard Intkhabs etc: Issuance of certificates detailed in the heading, issuance and renewal of Gun Licenses, and issuance of Fard Intikhabs etc. have become the main cause for public resentment and criticism against the working of the Revenue Department; and it has to be admitted that the public concerns are not totally unfounded. Therefore, there is need to streamline the procedures in all these matters, so as to minimise the scope of exploitation at the level of lower functionaries, taking benefit of loop-holes and bottlenecks in the existing procedures. In order to achieve the desired results, it may be desirable to constitute a Committee comprising experienced officers (preferably retired ones, of which there is no dearth in the State) to examine the issues involved in depth and recommend measures to improve upon the working.

VI. Administrative Inspections: From times immemorial, administrative inspections by senior functionaries in respect of their subordinate offices used to be given top priority. There are series of circular instructions issued on the subject from time to time, but unfortunately these instructions are not being strictly followed. For instance, in response to a RTI application in respect of six Districts (3 each from Jammu and Kashmir Divisions), there was response from only one District, which revealed that no administrative inspection of subordinate offices had been conducted during the period of last five years. Presumably the situation in other Districts is equally dismal.

VII. Touring: Another important aspect of working of the Revenue Department is extensive touring by Revenue Officers of the areas of their respective jurisdictions. Detailed instructions in the matter have been

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issued from time to time. For instance, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Inspections, vide its Circular as published in Government Gazette dated 7th February, 1985, while improving upon instructions issued by the Financial Commissioner under his No. G- 700/Misc-436-599 dated 01-06-1968, prescribed following minimum period of touring to be undertaken, the minimum number of nights to be spent away from headquarters each month by the Revenue Officers of various categories.

Officer	Number of days on tour	Number of nights to be spent outside H/Q
Deputy Commissioners (Except Srinagar & Jammu)	At least 10 days	At least 5 nights
Deputy Commissioners Jammu & Srinagar	At least 8 days	At least 3 nights
Asstt. Commissioner (Except Srinagar & Jammu)	At least 12 days	At least 6 nights
Asstt. Commissioner (Srinagar & Jammu)	At least 10 days	At least 5 nights
Tehsildars other than Jammu & Srinagar Districts	At least 10 days	At least 5 nights
Tehsildars Jammu & Srinagar Districts	At least 8 days	At least 4 nights
Naib Tehsildars	At least 12 days	At least 6 nights

Adherence of schedule of touring, prescribed as per instructions issued from time to time, by a Revenue Officer is a pre-requisite in order to achieve desired results. In this connection some important references pertaining to the old times, which seem to be quite relevant, both in respect of 'Administrative Inspections' and 'Touring' by Revenue Officers are quoted hereunder:

i. **Excerpts from Report on Administration of Jammu and Kashmir, year 1952-Samvat (1895-96- A.D.);**

(a) Para 314: "The Governor of Kashmir was out on camp for 177 days. He inspected all the Tehsils and Wazarats, and supervised the collection of revenue and shali, often making very rapid journeys."

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(b) Para 315: "The chakla of Naid Khai being subject to fluctuating assessment, the demand recoverable for the year under report was determined by the Governor, after personal inspection of the standing crops, and checking the Girdawari. The Governor further proceeded, in company with Settlement Commissioner for the settlement of the Tarhalla boundary dispute between the Durbar and Punch (Poonch)."

(c) Para 316: "The Governor of Jammu was out in camp for 90 days, during which he inspected the Tehsil and Wazarat offices, in Bhimbar, Jammu and Jasrota Districts, checked Girdawari of newly assessed Tehsils of Ranbirsingh Pura, Samba and Jasmergarh, and supervised the collection of revenue. He accompanied the Settlement Commissioner on his visit to the Andhar Illaka of Jasrota District, in connection with the irrigation dispute, referred to the arbitration of Mr. Rivaz, Principal Commissioner of the Punjab."

ii. **Ailan No: 49 dated 20th Chet 1977 (Samvat) issued by Masheer-e-Mal (Revenue Minister) and published in Urdu in Government Gazette dated 30th Chet 1977 (Samvat), when translated into English reads :**

"1. Every Tehsildar and Naib Tehsildar should inspect every Patwar Halqa at least once in a year and every village at least once in two years.

2. A Wazir Wazarat should visit every Patwar Halqa every second year and every Tehsil should be inspected at least once in a year."

This directive was issued ninety-nine years back, when means of communication, as compared to the facilities available now, were almost nonexistent. Revenue Officers would move on foot or at the most had to travel on horseback. If one can expect adherence of the schedule of touring and inspections in those old days; there could be no genuine excuses in achieving the targets as fixed under the said directive or latest modified directions on the subject in present times.

VIII. Responsive Governance: 'Responsive Governance' is one of the important components of good governance. In general terms 'Responsive Governance' implies as to how the State and other Public Institutions perform in responding to the requirements and rights of citizens. It broadly aims for Governments to do the right things for the people, and that the services to be delivered must be consistent with the citizen's

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desires and needs. Quite befitting to the topic, are quoted below experts from the statement by Economics Nobel laureate, Abhijit Banerjee issued after his meeting with Prime Minister of India held on 22nd of October 2019, when they discussed various issues, including the latter's views on governance and how he was trying to reform the bureaucracy.

"He talked about the way he sees governance in particular and why the mistrust of the people on the ground colours our governance and it therefore creates structures of elite control over the governance process, not a responsive government. ..... .

"In that process, he also very nicely explained how he is trying to reform the bureaucracy to make it more responsive, to understand the ways in which people's views need to be taken into account and expose them more to the realities on the ground.

"The Nobel laureate stated that he thought it was important for India to create a bureaucracy that actually lived on the ground and got its stimulus from how life was on the ground. Without this, we get an unresponsive government."

The advice of the Nobel laureate is quite relevant and needs to be followed in letter and spirit, in order to achieve desired goals aiming 'Responsive Governance'.

IX. Challenges: As comprehensively outlined by a dignitary in an interview, following three challenges facing the civil services have been identified.

i. The challenge of remaining honest, and to retain courage.

ii. The challenge to remain ideologically neutral, whatever the provocation.

iii. The challenge to learn constantly, improve and pick up new skill sets to deliver in today's world.

All these challenges apply to functionaries of Revenue Department of all the levels, particularly the Revenue Officers, to be met effectively, if personal as well as departmental dignity has to be maintained.

X. Implementation of the concept of 'Single Line Administration' and its impact thereof: Considering the geographical and topographical situation of the erstwhile (old) District of Ladakh, it was the first District in the State of Jammu and Kashmir where the concept of strengthening of District administration was experimented for the first time. As a consequence,

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thereof, the Deputy Commissioner Ladakh was declared as District Development Commissioner and vested with powers of Head of Department for administrative purposes in respect of all the departments functioning in the District. Taking a cue from the success story in that District, later on (early 1976) District Doda was also brought under the preview of similar scheme, and finding good response from all the quarters, in pursuance of Government Order No: 2380-GD of 1976 dated 14-10-1976 read with amplification issued under Government Order No: 2973-GD of 1976 dated 28-12-1976, the scheme (popularly known as 'Reorganisation of District administration or Single Line Administration') came to be implemented in whole of the State. In addition to other aspects, the basic objectives of the scheme included, (a) decentralization of authority primarily to lead speed to development programs, and (b) involvement of the people with the process of development. For purposes of affective implementation of District Plan in the State, every Deputy Commissioner came to be the District Development Commissioner and was entrusted with the overall, day-to-day control over the field staff working within the District belonging to every development department, which is concerned with the District plan. In respect of engineering works of all Development Departments (other than the Engineering Department themselves), the District Development Commissioner was vested with powers of Head of Department concerned to exercise powers of according 'Administrative Approvals' within the new and enhanced delegations exercisable by a Major Head of Department. The additional powers and authority vested in the Deputy Commissioners, of course, enhanced their prestige; at the same time developmental activities in the Districts received great boost. Nevertheless, with the increased responsibilities, the Deputy Commissioners had to devote much of their time and efforts towards achieving better results in developmental activities of the District and consequently they seem to have lost sight of their main duties towards the working of Revenue Department. The added responsibilities of carrying forward monitoring and co-coordinating developmental activities within the District would consume more time than other activities of the line Department. As a result, it is observed that Deputy Commissioners have not been able to devote desired time and attention towards disposal of case work, touring and inspections as also preparation and updating of Revenue Records. Besides, earlier if there arose any dispute with regard to certain developmental work between more than one village, areas or sectors, the Deputy Commissioner would act as a mediator and find out some amicable solution to the problem. But in his new Avtar, he being part, rather head of the decision making set up, his role gets devalued. Of late, may be taking a note of the situation, the

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Government created posts of Additional Deputy Commissioners in every District, and the duties assigned to Additional Deputy Commissioners were also specified and notified by General Administration Department. But it is felt that for various reasons even the order under reference is not being implemented in letter and spirit. The institution of the Additional Deputy Commissioner has failed to achieve the desired results; they have just become Staff Officer to the Deputy Commissioner. Obviously, overall working of the Revenue Department continues to be suffering quite badly. Therefore, some earnest steps need be taken to ensure that pristine glory of a prestigious institution is saved from being further deteriorated.

XI. Last but not the least, some important quotes and advice to act as guiding factors; especially for the new entrants to the Revenue Department are as under:

i. "Are you aspiring for success and advancement in your vocation? If so, you must love your job, you must love the place where you work, you must love your fellow workers and also those placed above and below you in the organisation. Instead of always complaining against your station, concentrate your thoughts on its good points and look upon it as an optimist. If your work is hard and troublesome, then too you must like it, for love will not only take its drudgery out of it and transform it into a joy; for when you love your work, you are likely to do it better and therefore, likely to get promoted sooner than if you did not take an interest in your work. Difficulties should be looked upon as opportunities, for they toughen your fiber and draw out your hidden reserves of power; therefore, the more difficult your job, the more magnificent the opportunity for developing your manhood or womanhood. Perhaps your function is to enforce discipline in an organisation and get work out of large number of people. If so, the best way, again, is through love, for as an old poet has sung, "It is better far to rule by love than fear". Loyalty and discipline based on love will increase your power and output manifold. On the contrary, unpleasant relations with fellow workers, friction in your organisation, will wear down the human machine faster than actual hard work. Tact, which avoids giving pain to others, merely keeps the machinery well oiled, but love is the electricity which can actually drive the machinery for you. There is no force as potent as love for generating enthusiasm and harness the energies of men. Popularity, essential for both happiness and success, is well worth striving for."

(Monthly Magazine 'KALYANA-KALPATARU' - August, 2018, page 64. Article contributed by Rajendra Behari Lal).

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ii. "Never let ego come in the way of learning. Till today, when I talk to people, if they show curiosity and no shame in admitting they don't know something, I see it as a big plus".

(Patu Keswani, an IIT-Delhi and IIM-Kolkata alumnus and founder of one of the fastest growing hotel chains in India - 'Lemon Tree Hotels', in Magazine 'OUT LOOK BUSINESS' - 26th October 2018).

Both these reflections are very relevant, in fact intrinsic, to the discipline of Revenue Administration.

iii. "Police Personnel have a very onerous responsibility on their shoulders. Everyone knows what is right and what is wrong. Everyone has the freedom to choose the path one likes. But as I hang my boots, I recommend the path of righteousness, path of truth, path of honesty and path of fair play and justice. The constitution, the laws and the rules should be our guiding spirit - and my dear friends work for the glory of the force, individual glory will automatically flow."

(Page 85 of the book by Dr Sudhir S Bloeria titled, 'The Men Who Served Jammu & Kashmir' - an excerpt from farewell speech delivered on March 31, 2010, by Dr. Ashok Bhan, (I.P.S. Rtd).

With the permission of the author the excerpt, if modified a bit, in the following words would serve as a guideline for personnel serving in Revenue Department at all levels;

Personnel posted in Revenue Department have a very onerous responsibility on their shoulders. Everyone knows what is right and what is wrong. Everyone has the freedom to choose the path one likes. But, the path of righteousness, path of truth, path of honesty and path of fair play and justice, is recommend, with a further rider that justice is a constitutional duty where compassion hold the balance. The constitution, the laws and the rules should be one's guiding spirit - and one should work for the glory of the Department, individual glory will automatically flow.

iv. Adherence of following principles advised;

1. **Never** interfere with a fair and considered order.
2. **Never** pass over an unfair order without reprimanding the officer responsible.
3. **Never** entertain a petition which lies to an officer of a lower grade.
4. **Never** reprimand an officer in the presence of his subordinates.

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(The observations form part of para 6 of the 'Review' on the 'Annual Report' of the Settlement Department for the year 1981-Samvat by L. Middleton, the then Settlement Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir.)

If we consider the situation prevailing at present, the four 'N' principle proposed to be adopted around a century ago holds good, rather need be adhered to strictly, if we really intend to bring a visible improvement in the working of the Revenue Department. However, the author would also like to add two more similar precepts as follows;

While handling any kind of difficult situation, weather concerning administrative matters or law and order;

1. **Never** become panicky; always remain cool.
2. **Never**, either become tense yourself, or make your subordinates tense.

In closing the narrative, few words of advice to the Revenue Officers as follows;

i. As elaborated in 'Appendix-I, Land Revenue Act', Revenue Department is administered through various Acts and Rules. Therefore, to become a successful Revenue Officer, one must be well acquainted and conversant with all these laws, rules and regulations.

ii. Make it a point to hold regular interactive sessions with subordinate staff, discuss the import and spirit of laws, rules and regulations as also the procedure for their implementation. Get regular feedback from concerned functionaries.

iii. Never try to superimpose, innovate or simplify rules and procedures, so as to make those at variance or against the spirit of Acts and Rules.

iv. Always write orders or dictate the decisions yourself and do not depend on subordinates; of course, one may discuss or consult with concerned experienced subordinate staff. Particularly, write mutation orders in your own hand on the spot, as also in presence of the parties, witnesses and general gathering. Announce the decisions then and there.

v. Make it a point to conduct field visits in order to ascertain

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ground position and consult relevant laws and rules every time before arriving at a decision.

vi. Reports sent by field staff should be properly analysed and not taken as 'Gospel Truth'.

vii. Enquiries should be conducted on spot and every interested party need be given reasonable opportunity of being heard and put forth its view point. Get feedback informally as well before making up your mind.

viii. Be accessible to all irrespective of any considerations.

ix. Not only be impartial, but also appear to be so.

In the end, may be at the cost of repetition, I would like to reiterate that of late the working of Revenue Department has not been the same as it used to be few decades ago. In the times of yore, it was not just a Government Department like other Departments, but besides being repository of vital land records as also important statistical data concerning agriculture and an important link between rural masses and the Government; it was also a place where every aggrieved person would approach for redressal of his genuine problems. Somehow, there has cropped up a general feeling that the attitude of 'Hakim' (the Ruler) has overtaken the concept of 'Savoir Faire', which, during the bygone era, was the buzz word as also core of the general style of working in Department. The greatest drawback, which has badly damaged image of the Department, is that officers in Revenue Department now-a-days lack personal contact with the people, and the people have started losing faith in those officers on whom, in the past, they would pin high hopes, particularly in the times of any type of distress. At the same time, the negative impact of rotation system of postings of officers, at least at the initial level of K.A.S. cannot be ruled out and needs a review; it will go a long way in improving the working as also image of the Department, if Revenue Department is kept out of the purview of the said rule.

Therefore, some serious thinking over the concerns expressed in this part of the narrative, at appropriate levels in the Government, is of utmost importance.



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APPENDICIES

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APPENDIX-I

The Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat)

There are more than sufficient grounds and valid evidence to believe that no other Department in the State Government is saddled with implementation or administration of such a large number of Acts, Rules and Regulations as the Revenue Department. In brief, among others, the following are the main Acts (in chronological order) with which Revenue Officers have to deal with quite often and exercise various powers vested under relevant provisions of these enactments;

i. **The Jammu and Kashmir Treasure Trove Act, 1954 (samvat).**

- The Act deals with property hidden in the soil, or in anything affixed thereto.

ii. **The Jammu and Kashmir Tenancy Act No: II of 1980 (samvat).**

- The Act is aimed to consolidate, amend and declare the law relating to the tenancy of land in the State. It was the first major reform in the field of agrarian history of the State. It defined the classes, rights, liabilities and interests of tenants. It helped in raising the economic, social and the personal status of the tillers.

N.B: With the enactment of Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976 (A.D.), this Act has become redundant to a large extent, but not totally irrelevant, as the common belief prevails in various circles.

iii. **The Jammu and Kashmir Land Acquisition Act, 1990 (samvat).**

- The Act deals with acquisition of land needed for public purposes and for determining the amount of compensation to be made on account of such acquisition.
  [Now replaced by the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (30 of 2013)].

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iv. **The Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act of 1996 (samvat).**

- The Act is aimed to consolidate, amend and declare the law in force with respect to making and maintenance of Record-of Rights in land, the assessment and collection of Land Revenue and other matters relating to land and the liabilities incidental thereto. It is the basic Revenue Law to deal with Revenue Administration. It deals with classes and powers of various Revenue Officers, the procedure for Appeals, Review and Revision of the orders passed by Revenue Officers, procedure for issue and service of summons, proclamations and their appearances, preparation of Record-of-Rights, Annual Records and revision thereof and trial of suits.

v. **The Jammu and Kashmir Evacuees (Administration of Property Act) 2006 (samvat).**

- The Act provides for the administration of Evacuee's property in the State. It vests the powers to administer said property with Custodian General.

vi. **The Jammu and Kashmir Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, 2007 (samvat).**

- The Act provides for the abolition of big landed estates and their transfer to actual tillers.
- By virtue of the Act, optimum unit of land retainable by a landlord was fixed at 182 Kanals.

vii. **The Jammu and Kashmir Kahcharai Act, 2011 (samvat).**

- The Act is aimed to make better provision for and to consolidate as also amend the Law relating to Kahcharai and other matters connected therewith.

viii. **The Jammu and Kashmir Chowkidari Act, 1956 (A.D.)**

- The Act is aimed to amend, consolidate as also declare the Law relating to the appointment and maintenance of Chowkidars in towns and villages of the State.

ix. **The Jammu and Kashmir Land Grants Act, 1960 (A.D.).**

- The Act provides for grant of lands on lease by the Government. It applies to State and Nazool land only, including buildings.

x. **The Jammu and Kashmir Lambardari Act, 1972 (A.D.).**

- The Act is aimed to amend and consolidate the Law relating

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to appointment and other related matters including payment of remuneration to Lambardars for realisation of Land Revenue and recovery of public demands etc.

xi. **The Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976(A.D.).**

- The Act is aimed to provide for transfer of land to tillers thereof subject to certain conditions and for better utilization of land in the State. It provided for transfer of land in ownership rights to tillers. The Act provides for reduction of the optimum retainable land/ceiling on land to 12½ Standard Acres (100 Standard Kanals) per family. By virtue of this Act absentee landlordism was abolished. It contained provision for resumption and disposal of surplus land. It provided for prohibition on creation of fresh tenancies.

xii. **The Jammu and Kashmir Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1988 (A.D.).**

- The Act provides for procedure concerning eviction of unauthorised occupants from public premises and for certain incidental matters.

xiii. **The Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Act/Rules 20.**

- The Act provides for regulation and grant of 'Domicile Certificate' in faour of such citizens as are covered under the said Act and Rules.

xiv. **Rules framed by the Government under the Acts enlisted above.**

xv. **Standing Order, No: 22 regarding Girdawri.**

- The 'Standing Order', initially issued in the year 1990 (samvat) by virtue of powers vested under section 32(3) and 43 of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Regulation No: I of Samvat 1980, provides for detailed instructions for conduct of Girdawari (harvest inspections). As per (opening) paragraph 1 of the said 'Standing Order', the measures detailed therein are sine qua non for watching and judging of the economic condition of the agriculturists, the framing of estimates for assessment and collection of land revenue, and the maintenance of the Record-of-Rights and the agricultural statistics.

xvi. **Standing Order, No: 23-A regarding Mutations.**

- The 'Standing Order', initially issued in the year 1990 (samvat)

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by virtue of powers vested under section 32(3) and 43 of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Regulation No: I of Samvat 1980, provides for detailed instructions dealing with various classes of mutations including powers and procedure for attestation thereof.

xvii. Standing Order, No: 23-B regarding Jamabandi.

- The Standing Order, initially issued in the year 1990 (samvat) by virtue of powers vested under section 32(3) and 43 of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Regulation No: I of Samvat 1980, provides for detailed instructions for preparation of the Jamabandi (annual record).

Besides, a Revenue Officer is supposed to have fair knowledge about the following Central and State Acts.

- Indian Arms Act,
- Indian Explosives Act,
- Code of Civil Procedure, 1977 (samvat),
- Registration Act, 1977 (samvat),
- Evidence Act, 1977 (samvat),
- Transfer of Property Act, 1977 (samvat),
- Kuth Act, 1978 (samvat),
- Code of Criminal Procedure, 1989 (samvat),
- Cinematograph Act, 1989 (samvat),
- Ranbir Penal Code, 1889 (samvat),
- Limitation Act, 1995 (samvat),
- Mohamdan Law relating to succession,
- Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (A.D.)
- Representation of People Act, 1957 (A.D.),
- Sikh Gurdwara Parpandhak Act, 1973 (A.D.),
- Public Safety Act, 1978 (A.D.), and many other Rules Regulations and Notifications issued by the Government from time to time.

However, as also indicated in chapter titled, "Introduction", in carrying out various and multifarious functions of the Revenue Department there may be a number of Acts passed by the legislature, and the Rules framed by the Government under these Acts, besides numerous

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'Standing Orders' and 'Circular Instructions', but it remains undisputed that the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat)/1939-(A.D.) plays the dominant and lead role in carrying out Land Revenue administration in the State. A very important and special feature of the Land Revenue Act is having a 'Record-of-Rights' in land. In fact, when the process of general reforms in the State started around samvat year 1980, 'Land Revenue Regulation No: I' of 1980 (samvat)/1923 (A.D.) was the first major and important legislation of the time, which was later on transformed and re-enacted in the year 1996 (samvat)/ 1939 (A.D.) and is currently in force.

J. M. Douie the famous officer in the Settlement Department of Punjab and author of 'Punjab Settlement Manual', published from Lahore in the year, 1899(A.D.), while summarising the meaning or object of 'Settlement' at para 5 of 'Chapter I of his book, very aptly, has elaborated the same further in the following words;

"To permit an individual to contract to pay the land revenue is usually an acknowledgement that he possesses a proprietary right in the soil, and the drawing up of lists (Khewats) showing the landowners in every estate, the extent of each man's right, and the amount of revenue for which he was primarily responsible, involved in our early settlements a determination for the first time of the ownership of every parcel of land in the country. It soon became evident that there were other persons who had rights in the soil besides those who could claim the offer of a settlement, and the advisability of making a complete record of all rights and liabilities connected with the land, including even those of tenants from year to year, was regularized. A settlement, therefore, consists of two main branches:-

i. The assessment; and

ii. The framing of a record of rights."

Remarks made by Shri Douie at paras 98 to 100 (chapter VIII) of the said book, are also worth mention and quite relevant to the subject matter under discussion, which are reproduced as under'

"98. A settlement which merely determined the revenue to be paid, without at the same time recording who should be responsible for the payment, would obviously be a futile operation. That the Settlement Officer should draw up a statement of the persons who engaged to pay the dues of the State was essential, and it came in time to be seen that it was

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desirable to give him power also to determine what the rights in the soil of different individuals were.

"99. Under ordinary circumstances the persons to give the State its share of the produce are evidently those who are found to be in possession of an exclusive right to till the soil and reap the harvests themselves, or to make it over to others for tillage. To be allowed to engage for the payment of the revenue naturally implies that the engager will have the power to arrange for the cultivation of the land, and, whenever the engager and the right holder have been different persons, the tendency has been for the former to encroach upon the privileges of the latter and finally to destroy them altogether.

"100. It became necessary, therefore, to determine who were in possession of such permanent rights in the soil as to entitle them to engage. Such persons were, in western phraseology, said to have a proprietary right in the land. Whenever, by the limitation of the Government demand and the establishment of order, rights in land became valuable enough to be an object of desire, it was important for the peace and prosperity of the country that they should be clearly defined."

Thus, the above statements justify the need for not only having records, but correct and authentic records depicting details of each land-holding. It further creates necessity to determine accurately the rights and liabilities thereof, and the persons, to whom these valuable rights belong as also to ascertain as to who are the persons responsible for payment of land revenue to the State. This in turn led to the creation of a 'Record-of-Rights' in land. It has to be admitted that it would just be beyond one's imagination to have a sound system of assessment and that of collection of Land Revenue without having accurate Record-of-Rights in the land. Rather, it would not only be difficult to fix liability for payment of Land Revenue and ensure realisation thereof; but it would also become impossible to settle disputes, if any, arising out of contradictory or cross claims for holding a particular piece of land; and there has never been a dearth of such disputes among illiterate rural masses. Therefore, all this needed a detailed and well-knit mechanism to regulate the process, and as a result thereof, 'Land Revenue Regulation/Act' came to be in place. At present, 'the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act 1996 (samvat)/1939 (A.D.) is in force in the State. Before going into further details about the Act, it would be in place to discuss, in brief, history of the same.

It is not that prior to coming into force of the Land Revenue Act, there was no system at all in force to regulate the preparation and

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maintenance of Revenue records. As far as the State of Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, a formal, regulated and first of its kind enactment known as, 'The Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Regulation, No: 1 of 1980 (samvat)', with opening sentence, "A law to consolidate, amend and declare the Land Revenue Law of the Jammu and Kashmir State", came to be in force from the 1st of Poh, 1980. In order to fully understand the system in force prior to coming into force of the Regulation, perusal of the contents of 'Preamble' and section 2-(Repeal) of the said Regulation would be of much help. As such, the same are reproduced hereunder;

"Preamble: Whereas it is expedient to consolidate and declare the law in force in the Jammu and Kashmir State with respect to the making and maintenance of records-of-right in land, the assessment and collection of land revenue, and other matters relating to land and the liabilities incident thereto; it is hereby enacted as under:

"Repeal: 2. (1) From the date when this regulation comes into force, all rules and orders previously issued regarding matters dealt with in this Regulation, so far as they may be repugnant to it, shall be considered to be repealed.

(2) But all rules, appointments, assessments and transfers made, notifications and proclamations, issued, authorities and powers conferred, farms and leases granted, records-of rights and other records framed, revised or confirmed, rights acquired, liabilities incurred, times and places appointed, and other things done under any of the rules and orders repealed, shall, so far as may be, be deemed to have been respectively made, issued, conferred, granted, framed, revised, confirmed, incurred, appointed and done under this Regulation."

Here it may also be in place to mention that when the process of reforms in the Land Revenue administration was initiated in the year 1887 (A.D.) by Shri A. Wingate; later continued by Shri Walter Lawrence and even thereafter, with the start of 'Land Settlement', majority of the middle rung officers who handled the work were lent from Punjab. Even, as mentioned elsewhere as well, Shri Ram Chandra Dobey, who hailed from Jammu region, and was initially appointed as Assistant Settlement Officer in the year 1966 (samvat), roughly 1909 (A.D.), and later rose to the status of Governor (present time Divisional Commissioner); prior to his appointment as such was working in the Settlement Department of Punjab. Initially his services were requisitioned by the Maharaja, and taken as a 'Lent Officer', although later on he was absorbed in the State service on regular basis. Besides, the Land Revenue system as also

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preparation and maintenance of Revenue records in the State of Jammu and Kashmir resembled to a maximum extent to that of the system prevailing those days in Punjab. Therefore, the Land Revenue Regulation enacted in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1923 (A.D.) was also on the lines of the Punjab Land Revenue Regulation. The enactment of Land Revenue Regulation, followed by the Tenancy Act and the Agriculturists Relief Act, was first and the most important development, after 'Land Settlement Operations'; towards improvement in the Land Revenue Administration of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Anyhow, it would be relevant to add here that prior to enforcement of the 'Regulation' under mention, matters related to Land Revenue Administration used to be dealt with in accordance with different notifications and proclamations (Ailans) etc. issued by the authorities from time to time. Therefore, as part of the general policy to consolidate and amend laws or rules on the subject, the 'Regulation' was adopted.

The Regulation comprised 161 sections, and its major highlights were as follow:

i. Although, rights of cultivators over State lands had been recognised during the process of 'Land Settlement', yet among others the word "Assami" or "Malguzar" were formally defined under section 3 of the said Regulation; which reads as, "Assami or Malguzar means a person, not being a tenant, who holds land directly from the State and enjoys the right of occupancy thereof, as against the State, so long only as he pays the revenue, cesses and malikana, fixed from time to time by competent authority, in respect of his holding: and not withstanding anything to the contrary in this section, malguzar may include, in Jammu Province, a person holding land directly from the State, although such person was entered in the record of a Regular Settlement as an occupancy tenant of class A in respect of such land".

ii. Under Chapter II of the Regulation, classes and powers of Revenue Officers were specified.

iii. Thereafter, detailed provisions were made in specifying set up of administrative control, as also the procedure for making Appeals, initiating Review and Revision in respect of orders passed by Revenue Officers of various classes. Authorities competent to hear and dispose of such Appeals, Review and Revision Petitions, as also the limitation periods were clearly provided for.

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iv. Section 30 of the Regulation provided that there shall be a 'Record-of-Rights for each estate. Besides specifying the documents which shall form part of the 'Record-of-Rights', detailed procedure for making Revenue records was provided for.

v. At the end of chapter IV, vide section 43; the Revenue Member, with the previous sanction of the Maharaja in Council, was delegated with the powers to make rules in certain matters including conduct of enquiries by Revenue Officers as also for the guidance of Revenue Officers pertaining to records and registers mentioned or referred to in the chapter. Various 'Standing Orders' such as, Standing Order No: 22, 23-A and 23-B, which are relevant and are in force even today, have been issued under this very provision of the Regulation.

vi. Vide section 45, rights of the State over mines and minerals were specified.

vii. Under section 46, presumably with a view to protect the environment, certain trees were declared to be 'Royal and Reserved' trees, besides imposing restrictions on felling of the trees and selling timber of these trees, except in accordance with rules in force on the subject.

viii. Chapter VI dealt with detailed procedure for assessment of Land Revenue.

ix. Chapter VII related to collection of Land Revenue, also specifying various penal clauses and the authorities competent to initiate process in effecting recovery where there would be a default in the payment.

x. Most striking feature of the Regulation was section 130, by virtue of which the rights of an 'Assami' or 'Malguzar' were declared hereditable. For the sake of ready reference, the section is reproduced hereunder: -

"130. The rights of an 'Assami' or 'Malguzar' are hereditable, and devolve according to the personal or customary law of the holder, as though they were a right of ownership in land"

xi. Another aspect of the Regulation had been that a full chapter, XII, was devoted to a detailed procedure for a reference to Arbitration any case arising before a Revenue Officer under the Regulation. Whereas, in the present Act i.e. the Act of 1996, in

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section 120 simply it is provided that the law as to Arbitration as contained in Schedule II of the Civil Procedure Code shall apply to arbitration in matters arising under the Act.

xii. Section 155 of the Regulation needs a special mention, which dealt with detailed procedure concerning prevention of encroachment on common lands. Sub-section 4 of the said section provided that disobedience of an order made and proclaimed under sub-section (1), (2), or (3) of the said section shall be punished by the order of a Revenue Officer not below the rank of Wazir Wazarat or Assistant Settlement Officer with a fine not exceeding fifty rupees, which may be repeated if the disobedience continues, in addition to any punishment to which the offender may be liable under the Ranbir Dand Bidhi (later Ranbir Penal Code). Provision of imposing a fine up to rupees fifty, almost a century (ninety-six years to be more precise) ago, seems to be good deterrence to prevent encroachments on common lands.

xiii. Under section 156, records prepared by a village officer came to be deemed as the property of the State. At the same time the village office (Patwari) was deemed to be a public officer having the custody of a public document for purposes of the Evidence Regulation (now Evidence Act), and these public documents declared open to inspection by any person.

xiv. Last but not the least, another important feature of the Regulation was that jurisdiction of Civil Courts was barred in respect of all matters which fall within the jurisdiction of Revenue Officers. For the sake of ready reference section 161 of the Regulation is reproduced hereunder:

"Civil Courts shall not have jurisdiction in any matter which any Revenue Officer is authorised by this Regulation to dispose of, or take cognisance of the matter in which any Revenue Officer exercises any power vested in him by or under this Regulation; and in particular:"

N.B.: Under this head twenty-three types of cases were enlisted. Since, 1 to 23 types of cases enlisted under section 139 of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act No: XII of 1939(A.D.) are almost the same, with minor changes such as use of word 'Act' instead of 'Regulation', as detailed in concluding part of this narrative; therefore, the same are not being given here.

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In this context, however, it will be relevant to add that, in fact, the process of baring the jurisdiction of Civil Courts, had its origin to the year 1890 (A.D.), when during the tenure of Sir. Walter Lawrence as the Settlement Officer of Kashmir; with a view to instill confidence in the minds of rural masses, especially the agriculturists, all suits connected with land in villages under Settlement work were withdrawn from the ordinary courts and made over to him (Settlement Officer) for decision. He would hear and decide the case on spot in presence of the parties as also the village elders. This procedure adopted by him was quite simple, and helped in disposing of cases speedily, and without wasting much of time and money of the parties involved. Therefore, it seems that taking a cue from the good response on this score, while framing the 'Land Revenue Regulation', (first of its kind in those times) a suitable provision was incorporated therein. Again, it will be of interest to the readers that the provision made under section 161 of.the Regulation, adopted in the year 1923 (A.D.), still exists in ditto in the form of section 139 in 'the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act 1996 (samvat)/ 1939 (A.D.)'.

However, with the fast-moving developments within and outside the State, only after sixteen years of the enactment of the Regulation of 1980, a more detailed and exhaustive law was enforced with the enactment of 'The Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (1939 A.D.), which aimed to amend, consolidate and re-enact the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Regulation No 1 of 1980. The said Act is in force even at present, although in keeping pace with the changed agrarian atmosphere and other administrative requirements, the Act has been amended as many as around forty times till date. One of the important changes, among others, pertains to change in the nomenclatures and classes of Revenue Officers. With the changed circumstances, when democratic Government was set up, while the Revenue Minister, in common parlance known as 'Masheer-e-Mall', replaced the Revenue Member, other changes affected, viz-a-viz the Land Revenue Act in particular, by virtue of Act No III of 2008 (Samvat) are enumerated as under;

(a) The posts of Governors were abolished and all matters pending with them transferred to the Court of authority competent to hear and dispose them off.

(b) The word 'Wazarat' substituted by the word 'District and the word 'District' so substituted to mean 'Revenue District' as constituted under section 5 of the Land Revenue Act.

(c) The word 'Wazir Wazarat' substituted by the word 'Collector'.

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(d) Among the Assistant Collectors of the 1st class; the Revenue Assistant was added.

Consequently, similar changes were also affected in various other related laws, rules and 'Standing Orders' issued under powers vested in pursuance of provisions of the Land Revenue Act.

Among others, the provision relating to classes of Revenue Officers have seen many changes, and the same are detailed as follows:-

A. As per Land Revenue Regulation of 1980 (samvat).

Section 6 of the said Regulation provides for classes of Revenue Officers;

6. (1) There shall be following classes of Revenue-officers, namely-

- Revenue Member;
- Settlement Commissioner;
- Governor;
- Settlement Officer;
- Wazir Wazarat;
- Assistant Settlement Officer;
- Tehsildar and
- Naib Tehsildar.

(2) The jurisdiction of the Revenue Member in matters under this Regulation shall extend to the whole of the territories of His Highness the Maharaja Sahib Bahadur, and that of the Settlement Commissioner to the Districts or Tehsils therein for the time being under Settlement. ..... .

(4) The Assistant Governor or Assistant Wazir-Wazarat shall exercise such powers of a Wazir-Wazarat as the Revenue Member, with the sanction of His Highness the Maharaja Sahib Bahadur in Council, may from time to time direct."

As a passing reference, it may be mentioned that the Governor used to be the Provincial head of the Revenue Department, who, in common parlance was also known as 'Hakim-i-Ala'. Wazir Wazarat headed the Wazarat and was the principal Wazarat Officer, who could be more or less equated with Deputy Commissioner of British India.

B. As per Land Revenue Act 1996 (samvat).

Here again section 6 of the said Act provided for classes of Revenue Officers;

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"6. (a) There shall be the following classes of Revenue Officers: - Commissioner, Collector, Assistant Collector of the first class, and Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.

(c) Until a notification is issued to the contrary the following officers shall exercise the powers noted against their names: -

- Revenue Commissioner ..... Commissioner.
- Governors of Jammu and Kashmir... Collector.
- Wazir-i-Wazarat Ladakh & Gilgit .... Collector
- Wazir-i-Wazarat ..... Assistant Collector of the 1st class.
- Revenue Assistant ..... Assistant Collector of the 1st class.
- Tehsildar ..... Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.
- Naib Tehsildar ..... Assistant Collector of the 2nd class."

N.B.

i. Revenue Commissioner was an officer at State level. It seems for a certain period of time the post of 'Revenue Commissioner' had remained nonexistent. Similarly, for another period of time there was no 'Provincial Head as well. The position was reviewed and revised vide Cabinet order No: 516-C of 1951 dated 24te of April 1951, extract from which reads as follows;

"..... sanction is accorded to: -

(a) The reduction of the posts and grants provided for: -

(1) two Governors

(2) seven Wazir Wazarats

(3) one Special Revenue Officer for Ladakh, and

(b) to the creation of one post of Commissioner and nine posts of Deputy Commissioners with the staff and grants as shown in annexures (A) and (B) of the order respectively.

(2) The Commissioner will be the head of the Revenue Department and will exercise administrative and financial powers in the officers of class 1. ..... ."

ii. Revenue Assistant was the officer appointed to assist the

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Wazir Wazarat, who more or less, could be equated with the present time Assistant commissioner (Revenue).

C. As per Land Revenue Act 1996, read with Act No III of 2008 (Samvat).

"Section 6 (1) There shall be the following classes of Revenue Officers:-

(a) The Commissioner;

(b) The Collector;

(c) The Assistant Collector of the 1st class;

(d) The Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.

(2) The Deputy Commissioner of a District shall be the Collector thereof. A Tehsildar shall be the Assistant Collector of the 1st class and a Naib Tehsildar, the Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.

(3) Unless the Government issues a notification to the contrary, the jurisdiction of the Commissioner shall extend to the whole of the State, and of the Collector and of Tehsildar and Naib Tehsildar to the District and Tehsils respectively in which they are appointed."

D. As per Land Revenue Act 1996, read with Act No XIII of 1956 (A.D.).

"Section 6 (1) There shall be the following classes of Revenue Officers:-

(a) The Financial Commissioner,

(b) The Commissioner,

(c) The Collector,

(d) The Assistant Collector of the 1st class,

(e) The Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.

(2) The Deputy Commissioner of a District shall be the Collector thereof; and an Assistant Commissioner and a Tehsildar shall be the Assistant Collector of the 1st class and a Naib Tehsildar an Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.

(3) Unless the Government issues a notification to the contrary, the jurisdiction of the Financial Commissioner shall extend to the whole of the State and of Commissioners to the Provinces and of the Collectors and Assistant Collectors to the District and Tehsils respectively in which they are employed.

(4) The Commissioner and the Collector, shall respectively

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include the Settlement Commissioner and Settlement officer and the Assistant Collector of First Class shall include Assistant Settlement officer and the Settlement Tehsildar, and the assistant Collector of the Second Class shall include the Settlement Naib Tehsildar:

Provided that the jurisdiction of Settlement Commissioner, Settlement officers, Assistant Settlement officers, Settlement Tehsildars and Naib Tehsildars shall extend only to the tracts under Settlement."

E. As per amendment Act No: XIX of 1961 (A.D.); sub-section (5-a) added as follows;

The Government may, by notification in the Government Gazette, confer on an Assistant Commissioner or Assistant Settlement Officer the powers of Collector and such Collector shall exercise those powers in respect of those cases under the Act or any other law for the time being in force as may be transferred to him by the Collector from time to time.

F. The existing provision as per Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat) (As ammended up to date).

"Section 6 (1). There shall be the following classes of Revenue Officers:-

(a) The Financial Commissioner,

(b) The Divisional Commissioner,

(c) The Collector,

(d) The Assistant Collector of the 1st class,

(e) The Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.

(2) The Deputy Commissioner of a District shall be the Collector thereof; and an Assistant Commissioner and a Tehsildar shall be the Assistant Collector of the 1st class and a Naib Tehsildar an Assistant Collector of the 2nd class.

(3) Unless the Government issues a notification to the contrary, the jurisdiction of the Financial Commissioner shall extend to the whole of the State and of Divisional Commissioners to the Provinces and of the Collectors and Assistant Collectors to the District and Tehsils respectively in which they are employed.

(5-a) The Government may, by notification in the Government Gazette, confer on an Assistant Commissioner or Assistant Settlement Officer the powers of Collector and such Collector shall exercise those powers in respect of those cases under the Act or any other law for the

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time being in force as may be transferred to him by the Collector from time to time.

(6) The Divisional Commissioner and the Collector shall respectively include the Settlement Commissioner and Settlement Officer and the Assistant Collector of the 1st class shall include the Assistant Settlement Officer and the Settlement Tehsildar, and Assistant Collector 2nd class shall include the Settlement Naib Tehsildar; provided that, the jurisdiction of Settlement Commissioner, Settlement Officers, Assistant Settlement Officers and the Settlement Tehsildars, and the Settlement Naib Tehsildars shall extend only to the tracts under settlement.

Provided further that, the officers other than those specified in the first proviso shall, unless otherwise directed by the Government, not exercise the jurisdiction in regard to cases arising out of Settlement operations".

G. Some other important provisions of the Act.

I. Provisions related to Appeals:

Section 11 of the Act deals with matters related to Appeals, which provides,

"(1) An appeal shall lie from an original or appellate order of a Revenue Officer as follows namely: -

(a) To the Collector when the order is made by an Assistant Collector of either class;

(b) To the Divisional Commissioner when the order is made by a Collector;

(c) To the Financial Commissioner when the order is made by a Divisional Commissioner:

Provided that,

(1) Where an original order is confirmed on first appeal, no further appeal shall lie except on the grounds mentioned in clauses (a), (b) and (c) of sub-section (1) of section 100 of the Code of Civil Procedure 1977:

(2) Where any such order is modified or reversed on appeal by the Collector, the order made by the Divisional Commissioner on further appeal, if any, to him shall be final;

(3) The Government may especially empower an Assistant Collector of the 1st class to hear appeals against the order of an Assistant Collector of the 2nd class."

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II. Limitation for Appeals, Revisions and Reviews:

Section 12 of the Act deals with matters related to limitation for appeals, revisions and reviews, which provides,

"(1) Save as otherwise provided in this Act, the period of limitation of an appeal under the last foregoing section shall be as follows:-

(a) when the appeal lies to the Collector or an Assistant Collector of 1st class. =.60 days;

(b) when the appeal lies to the Financial Commissioner or Divisional Commissioner. = 90 days;

Provided that, in the District of Ladakh and Gilgit twice the ordinary period of limitation for appeals under this section shall be allowed.

(2) Such provision of the limitation Act as apply to appeals, applications for revision and review in civil suits shall also apply to appeals, applications for revision and review under this Act."

III. Provisions related to Review:

Section 13 of the Act deals with matters related to review, which provides,

"(1) A Revenue Officer may, either of his own motion or on the application of any party interested, review and on his reviewing modify, reverse or confirm, any order passed by himself or any of his predecessor in office:

Provided as follows:

(a) When a Divisional Commissioner or a Collector thinks it necessary to review any order which he has not himself passed, and when a Revenue Officer of a class below that of a Collector proposes to review any order, whether passed by himself or by any of his predecessors in office, he shall first obtain the sanction of the Revenue Officer to whose control he is immediately subject;

(b) An application for review of an order shall not be entertained unless it is made within ninety days from the passing of the order, or unless the applicant satisfies the Revenue Officer that he had sufficient cause for not making the application within that period;

(c) An order shall not be modified or reversed unless reasonable

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notice has been given to the parties affected thereby to appear and be heard in support of the order;

(d) An order against which an appeal has been preferred shall not be reviewed.

(2) For purpose of this section, the Collector shall be deemed to be the successor in office of any of a lower class who has left the District or has ceased to exercise powers as a Revenue Officer and to whom there is no successor in office.

(3) An appeal shall not lie from an order refusing review or confirming on review a previous order."

IV. Provisions related to Revisions:

Section 15 of the Act deals with matters related to revise orders, which provides,

"(1) The Financial Commissioner may at any time call for the record of any case pending before or disposed of by any Revenue Officer under his control.

(2) The Divisional Commissioner may call for the record of any case pending before or disposed of by any Revenue Officer subordinate to him.

(3) If any case in which, the Divisional Commissioner has called for a record he is of the opinion that the proceedings taken or order made should be modified or revised he shall report that case with his opinion thereon for the orders of the Financial Commissioner.

(4) The Financial Commissioner may, in any case called for by him under sub-section (1) or reported to him under sub-section 3 pass such order as he thinks fit:

Provided that, he shall not under this section pass an order reversing or modifying any proceeding or order of a subordinate officer affecting any question of right between private persons without giving those persons an opportunity of being heard."

V. Provisions related to Record-of-Rights.

Chapter IV of the Act deals with 'Record-of-Rights, documents included in it, 'Annual Record' and procedure for making Revenue records etc. To some extent, importance of making and maintenance of Revenue records has been covered in the 'Introduction' chapter as also in earlier part of this narrative. Besides, it being a vast subject, it would require a

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fully-fledged book to be written on the subject itself, and of course, due to constraints of space in this book, the topic is left here.

VI. Provisions related to assessment and collection of Land Revenue and recovery of Other Demands by Revenue Officers.

Chapter VI, chapter VII and chapter VIII of the Act deal with the subject. There were times when this part of the Act used to be considered to be the most important, as the Revenue Officers would draw a lot of authority and powers form the provisions contained therein. But in view of the changed scenario, particularly due to insignificance of 'Land Revenue' in the State finances, the provisions contained in chapters VI and VII have become almost redundant. However, as per provision contained in chapter VIII, the power vested under chapter VII can be exercised in respect of certain other sums recoverable as arrears of Land Revenue, as declared as such under 'chapter VII of the Land Revenue Act or any other enactment for the time being in force.

VII. Miscellaneous Provisions.

Last chapter deals with miscellaneous provisions; and among others following are worth mention;

(a) Prevention of encroachments on common lands and prohibition on conversion of land for uses other than agriculture etc.

Section 133, 133-A, 133-B, 133-C, 133-D, deal with matters indicated in the caption above. By virtue of the powers vested therein the Revenue Officers have been empowered to protect the common lands and to take measure to prevent conversion of any water surface, water fields, floating fields, shalli/vegetable/saffron growing areas as also to strictly deal with contraventions thereof. While section 133-C, 133-D and 133-E deal with fine imposing provision and section 133-F deals with special provision of filing of Appeal against an order made under section 133-C or section 133-D.

(b) Exclusion of Jurisdiction of Civil Courts.

Another important feature of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act is that by virtue of provision contained under section 139 of the Act, it is provided as under;

"Except as otherwise provided under this Act -

(1) No Civil Court shall have jurisdiction in any matter which a Revenue Officer is empowered by this Act to dispose of or take cognizance of;

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(2) A Civil Court shall not exercise jurisdiction over any of the following matters, namely: -

(i) Any question as to the limits of any land which has been defined by a Revenue Officer as land to which this Act does or does not apply;

(ii) Any claim to compel the performance of any duties imposed by this Act or any other enactment for the time being in force on any Revenue Officer, as such;

(iii) Any claim to the office of village officer or in respect of any injury caused by exclusion from such office or to compel the performance of duties or a division of emoluments thereof;

(iv) Any notification directing the making or revision of a record-of-rights;

(v) The framing of a record-of-rights or annual record; or in preparation, signing of any documents included in such a record;

(vi) The correction of any entry in a record-of-rights, annual record or register of mutation;

(vii) Any notification of the undertaking of the general re-assessment of a District or Tehsil having been sanctioned by the Government;

(viii) The claim of any person to be liable for an assessment of land revenue or of any other revenue assessed under this Act;

(ix) The amount of Land Revenue to be assessed on any estate or to be paid in respect of any holding under this Act;

(x) The amount of, or the liability of any person to pay, any other revenue to be assessed under this Act, or any cess, charge or rate to be assessed on an estate or holding under this Act or any other enactment for the time being in force;

(xi) Any claim relating to the allowance to be received by a land holder who has given notice of his refusal to be liable for an assessment. Or any claim connected with, or arising out of, any proceedings taken in consequence of the refusal of any person to be liable for an assessment under this Act;

(xii) The formation of an estate out of waste land;

(xiii) Any claim to hold free of Revenue any land, mills, fisheries or natural products of land or water;

(xiv) Any claim connected with, or arising out of, the collection by the Government, or the enforcement by the Government of any

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person for recovery of Land Revenue, or any sum as an arrear of land revenue;

(xv) Any claim to set aside, on any ground other than fraud, a sale for the recovery of an arrear of land revenue or any sum recoverable as an arrear of land revenue;

(xvi) The amount of, or the liability of any person to pay fees, fines, costs or other charges imposed under this Act;

(xvii) Any claim for partition of an estate, holding or tenancy, or any question connected with, or arising out of, proceedings for partition, unless such question is to be determined by a Civil Court as a question of title arising out of the said proceedings;

(xviii) Any question as to the allotment of land on the partition of an estate, holding or tenancy, or as to the distribution of land revenue on the partition of an estate or holding, or as to the distribution of rent on the partition of a tenancy;

(xix) Any claim to set aside or disturb division or appraisement of produce confirmed or varied by a Revenue Officer under this Act;

(xx) Any question relating to the preparation of a list of village cesses or the imposition by the Government of condition on the collection of such cesses;

(xxi) Any proceedings under this Act for the commutation of the dues of a superior land-holder;

(xxii) Any claim arising out of the enforcement of an agreement to render public service in lieu of payment of land revenue;

(xxiii) Any claim arising out of the liability of an assignee of land revenue to pay a share of the cost of collecting or re-assessing such revenue, or arising out of the liability of an assignee to pay out of the assigned land revenue, or of a person who would be liable for land revenue if it had not been released, compounder for or redeemed to pay on the land revenue for which he would but for such release, composition or redemption be liable, such a percentage for the remuneration of a Zaildar, inamdar or village officer as may be prescribed by rules for the time being in force under this Act; and

(xxiv) The claim of any person for declaring ownership or any right in respect of grazing land and other prohibited Shamilat lands."

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Last but not the least; a mention needs be made in respect of the 'Supplementary Provisions' in chapter III of the Act, such as;

i. "Section 17. Place of sitting. - A Revenue Officer may for exercising his powers under this Act sit at any place within the local limits of his jurisdiction."

ii. "Section 18. Holidays. - Any proceeding of a Revenue Officer held on a day declared to be a holiday shall not be invalid by reason only of the fact that it was held on such day."

iii. "Section 19-A. Power to refer for enquiry and report: - A Revenue Officer may refer a case which he is empowered to dispose of under this Act to another Revenue Officer subordinate to him for enquiry and report, and may decide the case upon such enquiry and report."

In concluding the narrative, it may be added that the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act is the life line of the working of the Revenue Department. Although, the process of improvement in the Land Revenue Administration came to be started with taking up of Land Settlement by Shri A. Wingate in the year 1887 (A.D.) yet, introduction of 'The Land Revenue Regulation' in the year 1923 (A.D.), which later took the shape of Land Revenue Act, 1939 (A.D.), proved to be a milestone in the history of Land Revenue Administration of the State. All other enactments relating to land draw strength from the Land Revenue Act. Above all, the Land Revenue Act does confer required powers to the officers of Revenue Department to protect genuine rights of the rural masses with confidence, as also provides with required teeth and strength to enforce its provisions in right perspective. The Act is relevant even today and shall continue to be relevant in coming times too; although, with the changed scenario, review of certain provisions of the Act is need of the hour.



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APPENDIX - II

Land Settlement (Bandobast)

As per Collins Cobuild Advanced Illustrated Dictionary, the word 'Settlement, is defined as;

i. An official agreement between two sides who were involved in a conflict or argument.

ii. An agreement to end a disagreement or dispute without going to a court of law.

Similarly, as per 'New international Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary - Encyclopedic Edition- 2003, the word 'Settlement is defined as, "The act of settling, or state of being settled; specifically, an adjustment of affairs by public authority."

Otherwise also in general terms 'Settlement', ordinarily means;

i. An agreement intended to resolve a dispute or conflict' or

ii. An (official) agreement between two sides who were involved in a conflict or argument' or

iii. An agreement to end a disagreement or dispute without going to a court of law' or

iv. Outcome of a decision making something settled or resolved.

In the context of Revenue Department (the subject matter of the book) and in particular the 'Land Revenue', 'Settlement' of which Urdu equivalent is 'Bandobast', means the process of determination or settling the amount of 'Land Revenue' and who is to pay the same.

As has already been discussed in 'Introduction,' right from the ancient times, Land Revenue has been termed as a major form of public income, at least in the past. The Land Revenue in its primary shape was that portion of the cultivator's grain heap, which the State claimed for

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public use, and this method of realising bulk of the State income appears to have been practically the only method in force throughout the greater part of our country at least until the sixteenth century. Since very early times, Kings, Rajas or even lesser Chiefs were accustomed to share agricultural produce, unless it was remitted as a special favour or in lieu of services rendered. However, the sharing pattern has not been the same in various periods of history. For instance, during ancient period it was generally one-sixth of the gross produce (although there were instances that during war period the share used to be raised to one forth). During initial periods of agrarian development, there used to be the practice that whole of the produce would be heaped on the threshing floor and divided in presence of Ruler's representatives. In the later stages, the increase in population led to extension in cultivation of more and more land and it became difficult to supervise the process of division of produce for many reasons. While there were instances of concealment on the part of the peasantry, the intermediaries (collecting agencies) resorted to cheat both the peasant as well as the Ruler. That method, therefore, necessitated a change in the system and as a result, at some stage of time, the method of appraisement, in common parlance known as 'Kankoot' came to be introduced. Under the system, Ruler's share of the produce came to be determined by the estimates framed of the standing crops. These practices were prevalent in our State as well.

Thus, an agreement between tiller of the land and the State as to the share of produce or amount in cash in lieu of kind to be paid by the former to the latter came to be known as 'Settlement', and in the times of yore it used to be considered as an important aspect of the working of the Administrative machinery of the Ruling power of the time. In the process all lands of a village were measured, their rights or title determined as also recorded; and liability for payment of State share, commonly known as Land Revenue, used to be fixed.

It is assumed that our State inherited an antiquated land system, which historically owed its origin to practices in vogue during the most decadent period of native Rule and followed by changes made by men, who were aliens to the local problems and who could not easily assimilate the requirements and comprehend feelings of our people.

Under the Sultan dynasty of Kashmir (understandingly Sultan dynasty ruled Kashmir for 222 years from 1339 A.D.to 1561 A.D.) the Land Revenue system that prevailed in the Hindu period, does not seem to have under gone any radical change. But for the enlightened and peaceful rule of Zain-Ul-Abdin and the reign, though disturbed, of the few tolerant

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and cultured monarchs, the Sultanate suffered badly on account of internal strife, intrigues for power, periodic insurgency and loose administration. However, it was during the period of Shamas-Ud-Din (1339 A.D. to 1342 A.D.), when the State share of the produce was fixed at one sixth.

The Mughal Rulers did not interfere with the customary rights of the cultivators, whose relations with the Government continued much the same as before. There was, however, a progressive tendency towards raising the incidence of King's share of the produce. Practice of collecting revenue through contractors or Revenue Farmers and the assignment of Jagirs on a large scale led to the creation of intermediate interests between the cultivators and the State.

Initiated during the reign of Sher Shah Suri and carried forward by Akbar in the latter half of the sixteenth century, Todar Mal a legendry personality of the times of yore tried to introduce reforms in the system, which is remembered as land mark in the Revenue collection of those times. Some details about Todar Mal and the steps taken by him are enumerated hereunder.

Raja Todar Mal : As per an Article Published in famous Pakistani News Paper 'Dawn' of September 4th, 2016, an old event pertaining to 8th of November, 1589, was highlighted. According to the contents of the Article; on that date, "one of the largest funeral processions ever to leave the Walled City of Lahore headed for the River Ravi outside Mori Gate. The cremation of Raja Todar Mal was taking place and almost every dignitary in the court of Emperor Akbar was there". These words are sufficient to throw light on the popularity and respect Todar Mal had earned.

As is commonly known, from times immemorial, Land Revenue had contributed as a major part of the State Revenue almost throughout the country. The Land Revenue system prevalent during the reign of Emperor Akbar was the one introduced by Sher Shah Suri. In fact, Sher Shah was the pioneer, among Muslim Rulers, who tried to stream line the Revenue system. He got whole of the land measured and fixed the amount of tax on it on certain set principles. One of the striking features of the Sher Shah's Settlement was that every peasant was given a written document known as 'Patta' in which the share of the Government was clearly mentioned so that no unscrupulous official might try to bungle later on. Nevertheless, the Revenue system so introduced had certain inherent shortcomings. Firstly, it is said that he could not completely root out the Jagirdari system which had taken deep roots in the Afghan

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hierarchy. Secondly, according to the new system, cultivated area was measured and a fixed tax imposed based on the crop produced from the land at optimum known productivity. But it has to be remembered that Sher Shah got only five years to Rule. During that short period, he had not as yet tested his reforms comprehensively when the cruel clutches of death ended his life.

Nevertheless, defects in the system often led to tension between the authorities and the peasantry, particularly when weather or crop conditions were abnormal. Such situations led to certain peasant uprisings especially in the northern parts of in the country; the one which merits special mention was led by men like **Dullah Bhatti - the legendry "Robin Hood" of Punjab.**

Dulla Bhatti, who lived in the last part of the sixteenth century, belonged to Pindi Bhattian (now Punjab-Pakistan). His full name was Abdullah Bhatti, but he became popular by his short name Dulla Bhatti. As per historians of the time, his father Farid and grandfather Sandal, who headed the Bhatti clan - a Muslim Rajput family of hereditary local rural chiefs of the zamindar class, were executed on orders of the Emperor Akbar for opposing the new taxation system introduced by him. Dulla is said to have been born after four months of his father's execution. As per the popular legend, coincidentally Akbar's son Saleem was also born on the same day. It is said that at the time of birth, Saleem was under nourished, and, as per an advice from his courtiers, Akabr brought in Ladhi (Dulla Bhatti's mother) to his palace in Delhi and made her to breast feed Saleem as well. So, both Dulla Bhatti and Salim were breastfed by Ladhi - a strong Muslim Rajput woman. After his mother's return to home village, and after he grew up, he came to know about the fate of his father and grandfather, and vowed to take revenge. Tracking on the footprints of his father and grandfather, he practically waged a war against the Mughal Emptor, besides stopping paying any land taxes. So, he too was executed. Although written history is silent about the struggle, but folklore is full of heroic acts of the trio, in particular that of Abdullah Bhatti for upholding the rights of exploited and oppressed people. He also came to prominence as a savior of Punjabi girls, and is remembered at the annual 'Lohri' festival celebrations in the Punjab, Haryana and Jammu etc. even to this day. An excerpt from famous 'Lohri Song', a tribute to him, sung by girls says;

"Sunder mundriye hoe!
Tera kaun vicahara hoe!
Dullah bhatti walla hoe!
Dullahe di dhee vyayae hoe!"

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(Translation)

"Oh, Sunder and Munder
Who will think about you
He is Dulla Bhatti
Dulla's daughter got married."

Grave of Dulla Bhatti still exists in Lahore (Pakistan), and besides frequent appearing of 'Articles' in News Papers even in famous Dailies including "The DAWN", few films have also been made on the life of 'Dulla Bhatti. Few years back a film on the life of Bhatti was screened in Indian Punjab as well.

Although, these uprisings were ruthlessly crushed, yet that compelled the Ruling power to think for bringing changes towards betterment. Therefore, with a view to bringing improvements and overhauling the then prevailing system; but also targeting higher returns on account of Land Revenue, Emperor Akbar picked up Todar Mal and assigned this important task to him. Based on his experience in that regard gained during his earlier but short stint in the regime of Sher Shah Suri, Todar Mal went about the task in a more methodical way. As a first step, he standardised the weights and measures, divided the whole country into Revenue administrative units and appointed Revenue Officers, with 'Patwaris' at the lowest rung. These steps followed detailed measurement of lands, which, in fact put into place the principles of a Settlement for the first time in a systematic manner.

Towards standardising the measurement system, a new 'Gaz' or Yard, known as 'Gaz-i-Ilahi' was introduced as 41 digits (Anguls i.e. fingers of hand) or 33 inches in length to replace 'Gaj-i-Sikandri', in use earlier (Sher Shah's Gaz of 32 digits). Besides, earlier measurement of the land used to be carried with 'Jarib' a measure of hemp rope, length of which would change when wet or dry, enhancing chances of error. It was replaced by the new measures made of bamboo pieces which were joined together with iron rings. That was another big step towards bringing improvement in the system. This system came to be commonly known as Bamboo Jarib system.

For purpose of assessment of Land Revenue, a new system called as 'Zabat' or 'Zabti', and the taxation procedure that came to be known as 'Dahshala' was introduced. Under the new system, average produce of different crops as well as the average prices prevailing over the last ten years, catering for market price and yield fluctuations based on weather conditions, was calculated, and one-third share of the average produce

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was apportioned as the State share. With a view to ensure levy of tax rates in a rational way, lands were classified under various categories. Land which had been lying fallow for 3-4 year was categorised as 'Chachar'. This land was levied on a progressive rate and the full-rate was charged in the third year. There was another category called 'Banjar' or cultivable waste land. In order to make 'Banjar' cultivable, the land was charged with full rates only after it entered in the 5th year into its cultivation activities. Thus, regularity and productivity of cultivation was also made basis for purposes of assessment. After Land Revenue had been assessed in kind, it was converted into cash on the basis of 'Dastur-ul-Amal' (Price Schedules), prepared at regional level.

Change in the language and characters (Persian) used for the Revenue accounts was an important change introduced by Todar Mal. But the master stroke of Todar Mal was to get the Emperor, much against opposition of influential Court and Military leaders, to agree to let 'Zamindars' and peasants have hereditary rights. The 'Zamindar' was tasked with providing peasants with loans, seeds and implements. Against this he had the hereditary right to collect taxes, keep a small amount and remit the State's share. Peasants, in return, could not be thrown off land as long as they paid their taxes. It was a win-win situation that brought peace and a lot of money with it. The methodical and systematically carrying out of the reforms in the whole system earned Todar Mal the title of 'Dewan-i-Ashraf' in the year 1582, The reforms, besides other improvements, also included the humane considerations as well, as it provided for remission to peasants in the event of failure of crops on account of natural calamities such as floods, drought etc. In order to encourage the use of fallow or uncultivated lands, concessions and low rates of revenue were levied. Resultantly there was sudden rise in collection of revenue also.

Todar Mal visited Kashmir on number of occasions during the reign of Emperor Akbar, and, on the lines of reforms carried forward in rest of the country; he incorporated certain measures here as well, for improving the Revenue system including measurement of lands, preparation of Revenue records and assessment of Land Revenue etc. Certain references in the Lawrence's book do confirm this belief.

In history, Todar Mal is known for his fair, reasonable and scientific approach; a great economist and a great personality of Medieval India. His name appears very extensibly in 'Akabar Nama' written by Abul-Fazal. At the same time people of Kashmir also do remember his contributions towards agrarian system of the State. In this connection

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attention of the readers is drawn towards references about Todar Mal, in the famous book, 'The Valley of Kashmir" by the English Officer Sir, Walter R. Lawrence in the following words;

i. **Page 194:** *" The emperor Akbar apparently visited Kashmir three imes. In 1587 he brought with him his revenue minister Todar Mal, who with more speed than precision, settled the revenue arrangement of the valley from his camp at Pattan"*

ii. **Page 197:** *" But public works were not neglected, and Todar Mal's revenue arrangements, though hasty, had much of permanence in them. The institution of village officers dates from the times of the Mughals."*

iii. **Page 426:** *"Before the Mughal times I believe that a pure raiyatwari system existed, but Tonder, as the people style the great Todar Mal, introduced the offices of Lambardar and Patwari, and with them has crept in some ideas of joint responsibility for the land revenue."*

iv. **Page 457:** *"It is said that the present quaint, often unsellable, names are old Sanskrit words corrupted by Todar Mal when he drew up a list of the villages of Kashmir for his master Akbar."*

Similar reference in the Report on Census of India - Jammu and Kashmir, 1911 (A.D.) at para 10 is also worth mention, which reads as under;

"10. The fiscal history of the State is also a long one. The revenue system, here as elsewhere in India, dates from the Moghul period of Indian history. The first methodical Settlement of revenue in Kashmir was made by Raja Todar Mal, the Revenue Minister of Akbar. The primitive and crude system of payment of the share of Government in kind lasted here till very recent times, and was a source of great oppression and hardship to the people, resulting in wholesale corruption in the collecting agency and the consequent impoverishment of the people. The Kardars and Chakladars robbed both the State and ryots, and the whole revenue administration was rotten to the core. The first attempt at a Revenue Settlement, in its modern form sense, was made in 1873, when the short term of three years was given. Cash payments do not, however, seem to have been introduced till 1880 (A.D). ..... Regular Settlement did not come into existence until 1887, when a complete survey was made of the valley of Kashmir, and a ten years' Settlement was given. ..... The proportion of the State share of the produce of land has also been changing from time to time. It is alleged to have been half in the time of the Salatins of Kashmir,

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and two thirds during Mughal rue, but it is now at an all-round rate of 30 per cent on gross assets, which include fruit crops and all siwai (miscellaneous) items."

Thus, it would be appropriate to conclude that steps initiated by Todar Mal in bringing improvements, which may be called as 'land mark', in the 'land system' of the country as a whole and the State of Jammu and Kashmir in particular; can safely be termed as the basis for a land Revenue policy for generations to come.

Last but not the least, in recognition of Todar Mal's contributions to the cause of Land Revenue system and land survey as also laying down of a sound base for cadastral surveys, Indian National Cartographic Association has been organising a Memorial lecture series in his memory. The first lecture in the series was delivered in the year 1994 and has continued thereafter.

In 1846 (A.D.) when Maharaja Gulab Singh became Monarch of the State, the condition of cultivators was in a state of despair. As per Revenue collection system prevalent those days, the recovery of Land Revenue, as a share of the produce, made in the Province of Kashmir in kind and in the Province of Jammu in cash, had become a source of exploitation with wanton disregard for rights in property. Besides, most of the lands had been parceled out amongst Revenue farmers and Jagirdars; even there were people who were in possession of lands on the basis of un-reliable documents or much more than what they were granted. Maharaja Gulab Singh initiated steps to stream line the system and, in the process, confiscated some of the Jagirs, but the step did not augur well with the dispossessed landlords and they tried to create problems for the administration. In the process of bringing peace, not only many of the confiscated lands were restored, but some new additional assignments were made in favour of some of his kins as also to a group of Pathans (Afghans) in lieu of their Military services rendered to the Maharaja. Thereafter, he seems to have remained busy in consolidation and ensuring security of his kingdom and could not find much time in bringing any perceptible change in the crude system he had inherited from the Sikhs. However, as regards the system as it existed those old days, following observations of Sir Walter Lawrence, as recorded at page 399 of his book titled 'The Valley of Kashmir' are most apt to throw light on the same;

"Before discussing the revenue system as it stood when (land) Settlement of Kashmir was commenced, I would remark that ..... there were no records or maps to indicate what a man's holding in land

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amounted to, or to show what his revenue liabilities were, it is surprising, not that full justice was not done in cases of land disputes and in matters relating to taxation, but that any kind of justice was meted out to litigants, and it is probable that the helplessness and ignorance of the revenue officials was one of the chief causes why litigation has not hitherto possessed the same charm for the Kashmiris as it possesses for the Indians."

Maharaja Ranbir Singh, who succeeded Maharaja Gulab Singh and ruled the State between the years 1857 (A.D.) to 1885 (A.D.), did try to stream line the system, but no substantial improvement could be achieved. On the other hand, efforts made through summary Settlements, which did help in raising the Land Revenue demand, added to the woes of the resource less land holders, forcing many to abandon their farms.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh died in 1885 and was succeeded by his son Pratap Singh. A few years prior to Maharaja Pratap Singh's accession to the throne the Valley had faced a terrible famine of 1877-79 (A.D.), in which according to some estimates three fifths, but at least half of the population of Kashmir is said to have perished; as a consequence, the Government Treasury also got affected. Feeling much disturbed by the worsening condition of his subjects, and general unrest among the rural population, as also to strengthen the ill-equipped administrative set up of the State, the Maharaja decided to bring reforms in the then prevailing Land Revenue system. On approaching the Government of India to lend services of an experienced officer to be posted as Settlement Officer, Andrew Wingate, the then Settlement Officer in Udaipur, was deputed for taking up the important assignment. In addition, services of another experienced officer Lala Narsingh Dass to be posted as Assistant Settlement Officer and four other (selected) officers to be posted as Deputy Superintendents were also lent to the State Government. Accordingly, Wingate joined as the Settlement Officer of Kashmir on January 15, 1887, which date is very crucial, as the same can be safely termed as a turning point in the history of Land Revenue system in Jammu and Kashmir. The team took up the task quite earnestly, and initiated process in two Tehsils of Kashmir, namely Phak and Laal. It may be relevant to note that before arrival of the new appointed team, during a series of years, some areas had been taken up for measurement, but on carrying out on spot checks the work was not found to be at all satisfactory. It was observed that the work had been undertaken carelessly and in particularly lacked proper supervision. Therefore, it was decided to commence measurement afresh. The new team adopted the

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system prevalent in Punjab of demarcating squares before beginning field measurement, a system which even if more expensive was very convenient and popular. Where ground was uneven, the triangulation system was used. Even the scale, forms, registers and other procedures adopted were the same as were in use in Punjab, which had passed the test of the time. This way the process of Settlement was initiated, for the first time, in a systematic manner and in its proper perspective by a well-trained team of officers. But it seemed, some vested interests among the big land lords as also the official machinery were found not interested in success of the scheme, and it is understood that Wingate left the assignment when the work was still in progress on the ground that he did not receive required co-operation from the official machinery. On 1st of August 1888, Wingate submitted to Maharaja a preliminary report of the Settlement operations in Kashmir and Jammu. An excerpt (Para 73) from the said report reads as under: -

"73. I cannot conclude without representing that the conditions which environ my department are most unfavourable to good work. Your Highness's back is no sooner turned than the measures again suffer from obstruction. Coolies are seized, not only from villages under survey, contrary to your Highness's positive command, but even the parties are interrupted, and chain drawers and flag bearers are dragged away. Recently the Judge has begun to receive complaints against my subordinates for assault and the like and to issue process against them. Considering they are Punjabis working for your Highness in a country where they cannot even understand the language, and that a dozen Kashmiris can be made to give any evidence an offended chakdar or official instigates, my subordinate are not likely to consent to work absolutely alone in isolated villages with the prospect of appearing in Criminal Courts. My subordinates have a most difficult task and are exposed to every temptation. ..... . But as the object is to dishearten, to coerce, and to thwart till our work is stopped, it is my duty to state plainly that unless your Highness gives us open and unmistakable support, and unless it is understood that it is your Highness's unalterable intention to support us through good report and evil report, the forces arrayed against us are too strong, and with any sign of wavering upon the part of the Darbar our situation would become too dangerous for continuance."

Lawrence succeeded Wingate in April 1889. Walter R. Lawrence became well known to Kashmiri masses of those times, as the popular Land Settlement Officer and author of the famous book 'The Valley of Kashmir'. He not only became popular among the farmer community, but also received appreciation from the Durbar as well, which is evident from

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a reference in this context at para 231 of the 'Report of Administration of Jammu and Kashmir for 1889-90', reproduced hereunder;

"In a very able and elaborate report on the assessments of Lal Tehsil, for which Mr. Lawrence received thanks of the State Council, the following points referred for orders were disposed of at a special meeting to which Mr Lawrence was also invited: ....."

So much so that his name even figures in the famous 'Galancy Commission Report' presented to the Maharaja on 22nd of March 1932, i.e. after a gap of around thirty-six years of the time when Lawrence left the State; for instance, at page 27 of the said (Galancy Commission) Report', it is mentioned,

"It was in the times of His late Highness Maharaja Pratap Singh and on the recommendation of Sir Walter Lawrence, whose name to this day is rightly revered by the people in whose cause he laboured, that the cultivator was redeemed from his serfdom and assured of the rights which he now enjoys."

A reference in this context in the 'Report of Administration of Jammu and Kashmir State for the years 1993-94 (samvat)/1936-37 (A.D.) also needs a mention which is reproduced as under;

"In 1887, His late Highness requisitioned the services of Mr. Wingate from the Government of India and regular Settlement began. But the real credit must go to Mr. (afterwards Sir) Walter Lawrence who was appointed Settlement Commissioner in 1889, and who brought great sympathy and understanding to bear on his task. The first Settlement in Jammu and Kashmir was completed within seven years."

Similar reference is available at page 139 of the 'Gazetteer of India, Jammu and Kashmir State (Kashmir Region) as follows;

"....., a number of reforms in various directions were undertaken. Land settlement received the first priority and, in 1877 A.D., the State requisitioned from the Government of India, the services of an expert A. Wingate, to carry out the land settlement. Two years later, his work was taken up by Sir W.R. Lawrence who accomplished the assignment in seven years' time. The new settlement clearly defined the rights of peasants, fixed the areas of their holdings and the amount of land revenue they had to pay in cash. On account of land settlement, Lawrence acquired great familiarity among the peasant classes who even today remember him by the name "Lawrence Sahab". He ensured the security of peasants and disentangled them from the jaws of rapacious officials."

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Again, it may be noted that not only people of the State, but even his own countrymen have recognized contributions of Sir, Walter Lawrence in bringing improvements in the Land Revenue system of the State through the process of land Settlement. For instance, an English writer James Arbuthnot, who had authored a book titled, "A Trip to Kashmir", published in the year 1928 A.D., had dedicated said book to Walter Lawrence. The narrative of the 'Dedication' makes an interesting reading and is re-produced hereunder;

"The fact that this is only a little book does not relieve it from the necessity of a dedication; in fact the smallness and weakness of it make it all the more necessary to provide for a trustee, and in that capacity who could be more suitable than Mr. Walter Lawrence, for there is no one who has done more, or indeed anything like so much, for the lasting good of the country of Kashmir, than Mr. Lawrence did during his residence there as Settlement Officer. ..... from the Maharaja to the humblest peasant, all now derive the benefits of that wise and judicious land settlement, and I therefore, with due respect, dedicate my, 'Trip to Kashmir'

"To

WALTER R. LAWRENCE, C.I.E.,
late I.C.S."

Lawrence, as the records speak, took lot of pains in accomplishing the task. He himself used to supervise the survey work by staying in Kashmir, sometimes even during chilly winters. In this great task, Lawrence was assisted by experienced officers namely H.L. Rivett, Lala Narsingh Das and Saiyad Alam Shah. According to Lawrence these offices were men of integrity and ability, who left behind them an excellent name in the Department. In fact, Lawrence was very much impressed by the efforts put in by these officials, besides some more in the lower grades in the Settlement wing. So much so, Lawrence has consumed a full page at the end of chapter XVIII of his book in summing up his observations in this regard. For the sake of brevity as also to sum up the matter it would suffice to reproduce only one small sentence from his narrative, i.e. **"To all these I am much indebted"**. The good work done by Lawrence and his team of officers was carried forward by a succession of efficient Settlement Commissioners. The Settlement operations were first started in the Kashmir Valley and then in the Jammu District and was later extended to Ladakh including Gilgit as well. This way steadily the whole State was brought under the first 'Regular Settlement', which commenced in 1887 A.D. and was completed in the Kashmir Province

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including the Frontier District of Ladakh in 1901 A.D. and in the Jammu Province in 1915 A.D. The Land Revenue at these Settlements was fixed at 30 % of gross produce.

As earlier too mentioned, at the time the process of Settlement was initiated; the state of affairs in the management of Land Revenue system was not in good stead and that the job was not a cake walk to be easily carried forward. Lawrence too had to face non-cooperation at the initial stage. The official machinery was hell bent in creating hurdles in the work, as its success would adversely affect their vested interests. Lack of confidence from cultivators on the official machinery was an added factor. Therefore, he had to work very hard in motivating people and making them understand the benefits likely to be accrued to them in turn. As a first step towards winning confidence of the people, all suits (disputes) related to land in rural areas were withdrawn from ordinary courts, transferred to Settlement Officer and decided expeditiously on spot with the involvement of village community. It will be appropriate to quote few paragraphs from Lawrence's famous book, "The Valley of Kashmir' as under:

Page 3- *"The country was in confusion, the revenue was falling off, and those in authority were making hay while the sun shone. ..... His Highness the Maharaja Pratap Singh, G.C.S.I., recognizing that it was impossible to check these abuses without records and statistics, resolved on effecting a Land Revenue Settlement of his country. At first it was extremely difficult to persuade the people that the Settlement would be a reality, or to inspire them with a belief that there would be some continuity in the administration. ..... Land which had no value in 1989(Samvat) is now eagerly sought after by all classes."*

Page 6- *"The work of Settlement has been anxious and difficult. Powerful interests were at work against us, and if it had not been for the loyal and consistent support rendered to me by His Highness the Maharaja and his advisors, these interests would have made a Settlement impossible."*

However, before closing this part of the narrative, it would also be befitting to add that Kashmir Valley has remained abuzz with hordes of anecdotes connected with Settlement and in particular the working of W.R. Lawrence; out of which in view of space constraints, only few are restated as follows;

i. While moving from village to village in connection with the

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Settlement work, Lawrence was always accompanied by number of local men, but three men among whom two were Muslims and one a Hindu, were very special for him. He had hired them locally during his work in Sindh Valley. All the three had good knowledge about types and classifications of lands in their area and proved helpful as also provided reliable counselling to Lawrence in arriving at correct decision. Lawrence would call them 'original friends' but never gave them any rewards, except occasional good feast or small quantities of sugar, snuff or rice. Even when Lawrence left Kashmir, these 'voluntary advisers' never felt disappointed when they received nothing other than letters of thanks from Shri Lawrence.

ii. It is said that daughter of famous English novelist Charles Dickens was one among the admirers and women friends of Lawrence. Once, she is said to have asked Lawrence, 'would you live life again?'; to which he replied, "every moment of it! and as for my six years in Kashmir, I would live those years fifty times over. Having spent six years in Kashmir unspoiled by railways, roads, innocent factories ..... sleeping in boats or in tents always pitched on green turf under the shade of trees and mostly within sound of running singing water".

In the end, it needs to be shared with the readers that completion of Settlement work in Valley meant leaving Kashmir, which in fact was quite painful for Sir Walter Roper Lawrence. During his stay for around six years (early 1889 to close of 1894) he had developed special attachment with the people and land of Kashmir. He had another stint of posting in India as Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India starting from year 1902, and when that also came to an end he is learnt to have regretted the departure. During those very days Lawrence had expressed a touching tribute for Kashmir in the following words,

"Kashmir was my paradise, for the work was a constant pleasure. But in a way it unfitted me for the life outside paradise and though I have had the happiest chances and the most delightful experiences since I left the happy valley. I always compare my life now with my life then and nothing has rivalled Kashmir."

Any how, it has to be admitted that the process of (Land) Settlement did create a positive impact on common masses of the State, particularly the farmers of the valley of Kashmir. In this context, excerpts from a few famous 'Reposts' published by the Government are quoted hereunder;

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a. Page 10 of Census of India 1901 - Kashmir volume XXIII.

Para 45: *"Under the Settlement operations the payment of revenue in kind has been done away with and that in cash introduced. It is advantageous to the farmer in as much as it affords facilities to him in disposing of his extra produce at his own free will. Cultivators are, therefore, better off now and enjoy peace and prosperity. The conferment of the 'Assami' rights on hereditary cultivators, substitution of payment in cash for kind and introduction of the system of engagements direct with assamis - doing away with tyrannous interference of middlemen - has assured to the agriculturists security of tenure and fixity of revenue demand. Considerable areas have, therefore, been reclaimed and converted into flourishing fields during the last decade, and I think that average prosperity of the agricultural population will now favourably compare with that of any other country."*

b. Page 27 of the 'Galancy Commission Report

"Nevertheless, it may be said that agriculturists in the State in general, particularly in the Kashmir Province, have progressed considerably since the time of the first regular Settlement. Certainly, they are far better off materially than they were forty years ago, they should have less temptation to part with their land ..... ."

c. Page 9 of 'the Report of Administration of Jammu and Kashmir State, for the year 1993-94-Samvat (1936-37- A.D)'.

"The main features of Mr. Lawrence's work which had the complete approval of His Highness and the State council were: -

The State demand was fixed for ten years.

As a first step towards substitution of payment in cash for payment in kind, the proportion of the latter was so fixed as to cause the least hardship to the cultivators and maintain the confidence of the city population.

The Sepoys who attended at harvest to coerce the cultivators were removed. (In other words, use of force in collection of land Revenue was done away with.

Begar in its more objectionable form was abolished and the cultivators who abandoned their lands for fear of being impressed into Begar were recalled and settled on their lands.

Occupancy rights were conferred on Zamindars over un-disputed lands.

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Careful enquiry was made into the status of privileged holders of land. The special rates were continued for the term of the first Settlement but were made subject to re-assessment. Lands in excess of sanctioned area, were, however, assessed at ordinary the rates, even in the case of privileged holders.

Waste lands were entered as khalsa, but preferential rights for acquiring of such land was granted to Assamis.

Permanent but non-alienable hereditary occupancy rights were granted to those who accepted the first assessment, so long as the revenue was paid.

All lands were carefully evaluated on the basis of next produce, previous collections and possibility of irrigation."

(Author's note: The term of land Revenue Settlement was later on raised from 10 to 20 years then to 30 years, and lastly as per notification dated 17th May 1931, published in the Government Gazette dated 22nd May1931, on the occasion of birth of the Yuvraj Shri Karan Singh, the term was further raised to 40 years.)

In general terms, the Settlement (traditional method) involves following steps;

i. Reading out entries of last available Jamabandi in presence of all right holders and noting down discrepancies pointed out, if any, commonly known as preliminary attestation (Tasdiq Ibatadai).

ii. The Patwari has to draw up or enter mutations in respect of all changes brought into notice during preliminary attestation and/or reflected in the Girdawari register during intervening period, and obtain orders on such mutations from Mutating Officer. Thereafter, the orders are reflected with red ink on the old Jamabandi, besides updating Shajra Nasab Malikan (Owners).

iii. Updating of latest Jamabandi by incorporating all mutations attested since the preparation of the last Jamabandi.

iv. Delineation of village boundaries (in Revenue Department or in common parlance known as 'Hadbast Deh') along with Patwaries of the adjoining village(s) and to establish proper marks of identification at each turn.

v. Repair or erection of Boundary Pillars, wherever required.

vi. Demarcation and identification of State (Sarkar), Shamllat and

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other common lands for purposes of locating as also determination of encroachments, if any.

vii. Preparation/recording rough sketch (Chamunda), as also the Khatuni Kham after visiting each and every field, in association of concerned right holders, village Headman etc.

viii. Drawing 'Basic Line' (Khat Buniadi) and then dividing the whole village into 'Squares' or Triangles, as also drawing the same on drawing sheet (Massavi).

ix. Measurement of each field as per position obtained on spot, starting from North-West corner of the village. Plotting of fields in Massavi and simultaneously taking up area calculation (Istekhraj) and preparation of Field Book (Khasra Paimaish).

x. On completion of measurement work, take up preparation of khatuni Kham, distribution of copy of the same (Parcha) to each right holder and after disposing of objections, if any, preparation of the Khatuni.

xi. After the Khatuni is prepared, the same has to be read out by Settlement Naib Thehsildar, Settlement Tehsildar in presence of all the right holders including other forming part of the village community, and after affecting changes, if any required, it has to be attested, known as final attestation (Tasdiq Aakheer).

xii. Based on the Khatuni, preparation of the 'Record-of-Rights', which includes other important documents such as village Masavi, Shajra Nasab, Riwaj Aabpashi, Wajib-ul-Araz etc.

xiii. After the Record-of-Rights..... is finally approved and assessment of Land Revenue after having received approval of the competent authority is announced by the Settlement Officer, preparation of a duplicate copy of the same is undertaken. Similarly, a copy of the Village Map Massavi) is traced out on cloth, known as Latha.

xiv. While the originals i.e. Record-of-Rights and Village Map are deposited with Provincial Settlement Record Room, the other copies remain with Patwari for carrying out day today work.

Actual process of measurement called Cadastral Survey (Traditional method) involves a cumbersome procedure. It covers detailed measurement of fields with the help of 'Takhta-Sehpai' 'Cross-Staff', Chain', Suaa' (long iron nails) and 'flags'; the process is not very difficult and can be handled even by ordinary persons with few months training, but of course demands precision. In the process, in the

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first instance, a base line is drawn and then whole of the village is divided into 'Squares' or 'Triangles' depending upon the topography. To measure a field the corners and bends of the field are marked out with some objects like white washed stones or flags. By moving along the lines of a Square or a triangle, as the case may be, offsets are taken at each corner. A flag is seen through one groove on line (of a Square or Triangle) and another flag is fixed on the corner and seen through the other groove of the cross. In this way, a right-angled triangle is formed on the ground. In this way; all the fields to be surveyed are divided (notionally) into right-angled triangles and trapeziums, and measurement under taken for the whole village.

With the help of the measurement details noted in a copy book during the day, the fields are plotted in the evening on a village map locally known as 'Massavi' to a scale, viz. one inch =40 karams (220 ft.). A scale made of brass is used for this purpose which bears 20 marks to an inch and each mark equals 2 karams (11ft). The plotting of fields on 'Massavi' follows area calculation with the help of 'Brass Scale', known as 'Paimana', to be recorded in a register called 'Field Book' also known as 'Khasra Paimaish'. At the end of the Settlement the 'Massavi' is traced on a special quality cloth in common parlance known as 'Latha' for day today use by the Revenue Officials.

It may, however, be mentioned that w. e. f. the year 1998-99 A.D., the traditional system of measurement has been replaced by the latest State of the Art technology known as Electronic Total Station (E.T.S.). While as in the case of traditional survey, as indicated at earlier para, the measurement is followed by preparation of Khasra-Paimaish (Field Book) and area is calculated khasra Number wise. But, in the case of E.T.S. khasra Number wise calculation of area, as in the traditional manner, is no more required.

The assessment of Land Revenue, though only one of the many functions of the Settlement wing of the Revenue Department, in the times of yore, was possibly the most important objective of the 'Settlement'. However, with the changed circumstances including almost negligible share of Land Revenue being part of the State's revenues, this aspect has lost its significance. But another as also the most important objective of 'Settlement' is to update and prepare afresh revenue records of each Estate after every certain/prescribed interval, following the provisions of law, rules and guidelines on the subject, issued by the Government from time to time. The record thus prepared, in common/Revenue parlance is called as, 'Record-of-Rights', which has a legal standing. In accordance

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with the provision contained in section 31 of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Bikrami), entries contained in the 'Record-of-Rights' are presumed to be true until the contrary is proved in respect of all lands covered there under vis-a-vis the rights, interests, liabilities of the land holders.

Despite lapse of a considerable time after the previous Settlement, the process could not be taken up for various reason including disturbances in the State. However, after initiation of the democratic set up, the sanction was accorded to the revision of Settlement in six Tehsils (old Tehsils) viz. Baramulla, Handwara and Sopore of Kashmir Division as also Tehsils Rajouri, Haveli and Mendhar of Jammu Division. Veterans Syed Nisar Hussain Shah and Ram Chandra Raina were appointed as Settlement Commissioner and Deputy Settlement Commissioner respectively. Later on, however, Ram Chandra Raina succeeded Syed Nisar Hussain Shah as Settlement Commissioner. For purpose of carrying out of the program in an organised manner, detailed guidelines known as 'Hidayat Bandobast No; 1' and 'Hidayat Bandobast No; 2' were issued which remained relevant for a long period. In the year 1962 the Settlement operation was extended to other parts of the State as well. But unfortunately, and for reasons not publicly known, after a short period only the program came to be disbanded. Again, in the year 1985, when Sheikh Ghulam Rasool became the Financial Commissioner, he took great interest and the initiative for re-starting Settlement, initially on pilot basis in few Tehsils viz part Tehsil Jammu and part Tehsil Ramban of Jammu Division' as also part Tehsil Anantnag and part Tehsil Beejbehara of Kashmir Division, which thereafter came to be extended in certain other areas as well. In order to give a fillip to the scheme, initially four 'Task Forces' were constituted each headed by a Settlement Tehsildar, with a general mandate to first take up only those villages where revenue records were either not available or were not up-dated for long periods. For purpose of manning these 'Task Forces' officers and officials were selected after holding series of meetings and consultations with those who mattered. Again, it was that very period when sufficient funds were got allocated as also utilized for purchase of survey instruments, connected stationary and allied material. As during the intervening period, lot of changes had come up including those resulting from implementation of amendments in various provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Tenancy Act 1980 (Bikrami), the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, 2007 (Bikrami) and the Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976 A.D etc., therefore, with a view to overcome difficulties being faced by the field agency as also in order to update the earlier instructions, a

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Committee was constituted to review 'Hidayat Bandobast' No: 1 and No: 2 issued in the year 1956 and 1958 respectively. The Committee headed by writer of the book as Chairman comprised serving as also retired meritorious officers and officials. On receipt of recommendations of the Committee, the draft was discussed in a larger group of serving as also retired officers and officials of the Department, seeking their valuable view points, and then only revised instructions in the shape of a booklet titled 'Jadid Hidayat Bandobast' was issued in pursuance of Financial Commissioner's order No; FC/SS/Sett/91/1 dated 18-09-1992.

Again, with the introduction of new technology in measurement procedures and preparation of Revenue records, necessity had been felt for issuance of supplementary instructions. Therefore, in accordance with the approval accorded by the Government, vide order No: 9-2005/62/S/Rev dated 2oth July 2005 another instructions book titled; 'Hidayat Bandobast- year 2005' was issued during the period when Shri Ghulam Nabi Mir was the Settlement Commissioner.

In the current phase, Settlement wing of the Revenue Department has taken up Settlement operations in the State on regular basis from the year 1998. In order to prepare/revise the existing Records-of-rights, the Government has issued notifications from time to time under Section 22 of Land Revenue Act where under various estates of different Tehsils, where the Record-of-Rights was either partially or totally damaged or not existed were notified to make/revise Record-of-Rights, as the case may be.

The task to carry out fresh revision of land records was assigned to the Settlement Commissioner at State level assisted by two Settlement Officers stationed at Jammu and Srinagar. Initially, the traditional chain method of measurement was adopted, but the Department switched over to the 'Electronic Total Stations' in short E.T.S. in the year 1998 under the program "Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records" (SRA and ULR) and Computerization of Land Records (CLR) - the two central sponsored schemes. However, on 21st August, 2008, the Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources, Government of India, launched a new program called 'National Land Records Modernisation Program (NLRMP) after subsuming the previous two programs viz "Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records" (SRA and ULR) and Computerization of Land Records (CLR).

In order to execute the NLRMP smoothly, a Programme Management Unit (PMU) was constituted by the State Government, vide

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Government Order No: 97 -GAD of 2012 dated 20.01.2012, headed by Chief Secretary as Chairman and Financial Commissioner (Revenue) as Chief Executive Officer. The PMU constituted with a two-tier system i.e. Executive Body headed by Chief Executive Officer and Governing Body headed by Chief Secretary as per guidelines of the Scheme. It was registered with the Registrar of Societies, Kashmir as a Society on 28.06.2013 in the nomenclature of Jammu and Kashmir Land Management Agency (JaKLaRMA). Bye laws of the society were formulated and approved by the Governing Body in the meeting held on 20.05.2013 under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary J&K.

It also provides for a Regional Level implementation set up with Regional Director Survey & Land Records as Regional CEO. The Additional Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners Revenue / SDMs have been designated as its members. The Regional CEO may co-opt any other member as he/she desires. However, in the year 2013, it was felt that the present organizational structure may not achieve the desired purpose. Therefore, in order to rejuvenate the Settlement Organization in the State, the Government re-organized and re-structured this wing in 2013. Seven Regional Directorates of Survey and Land Records (Ex-Officio Settlement Officers) have been created in the whole State to carry out the Settlement operations.

With effect from 1st April, 2016 the land records in the State are being updated/modernised under "Digital India Land Records Modernization Program" (DILRMP). The said program is 100% centrally funded for all its components. The programme carries the following aims and objectives;

- To modernise management of land records.
- Minimise scope of land / property disputes.
- Enhance transparency of land records.
- Easy accessibility of land records to land owners.
- Facilitate moving towards guaranteed conclusive titles to immoveable properties in the country.

As approved by JaKLaRMA, the NLRMP/DILRMP is envisaged to be implemented in the State in three phases as under;

Phase I:

Part (A): Implementation of modern land record management system, including survey through High Resolution Satellite Imagery (HRSI) technique and ground truthing by Electronic Total Station (ETS) and

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Deferential Global Positioning System (DGPS) in two Districts of Jammu and Srinagar.

Part (B) : Three parallel activities to be undertaken across the State: -

i. Scaning of old land records and archival of scanned data.

ii. Establishment of Ground Control Points (GCPs) network.

iii. Development of web-based enterprise-CIS Cadastral Information System.

Phase II:

10 more Districts namely Poonch, Ramban, Baramullah, Anantnag, Kargil, Udhampur, Leh, Doda, Bandipora and Rajouri to be taken up.

Phase III:

The remaining 10 Districts namely Kathua, Kulgam, Shopian, Budgam, Reasi, Ganderbal, Pulwama, Kupwara, Kishtwar and Samba to be taken up.

The implementation of phase-I of the project DILRMP was outsourced to M/s RAMTeCH Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd; a Noida based IT / ITES Company at a cost of Rs. 45.42 crore, with a time frame of 28 months starting from November, 2015 to February, 2018. Reportedly the project actually started with a delay of around six months in April, 2016, and as per approval accorded by the Governing Body in its 4th meeting held on 19-02-2019, the time line of the Phase-I of the project has been extended up to 30th September. 2019. The implementation of the programme in remaining twenty Districts, ten each in phase II-III is slated to complete by March, 2020 and March, 2022 respectively.

As a part of the modernization program, the Central Record Rooms at Jammu and Srinagar have been equipped with facility of providing scanned copies of extracts of revenue records to land holders. Reportedly the facility has been started w.e.f. August, 2018. Besides, it has been decided to establish a State Data Center of Revenue Department, and the work has been assigned to the State Information Technology Department, as per a decision taken by the Governing Body of PMU, in a meeting held on 10-02-2019, chaired by the Chief Secretary.

Summing up the narrative on the subject, it will be in place to add that undoubtedly, right from the Mughal period followed by the British and the present era, the main purpose behind taking up the scheme

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known as 'Settlement' was to stream line the process of realisation of Land Revenue in order to boost the major source of State revenue. With the passage of time, although, the Land Revenue being quite insignificant vis-à-vis other components of State revenues, has lost its importance, yet it has to be admitted that the utility of 'Settlement' continues to be there. Leaving aside the Land Revenue part, keeping our land records up-dated has gained much importance, particularly in view of the fact that the development stage through which our State is passing as a part of implementation of various Central/State sponsored schemes, almost every important activity would require help of Revenue record. And in view of the fact that with the exception of few Tehsils in the State, there has been a long gap of around a century from the date last Settlement was conducted, it has become necessary to take up that process in right earnest. Again, it may be added that although, as pointed out at previous paragraphs, the work has been taken up under a centrally sponsored scheme, but it is felt that the program lacks, particularly at implementing level, the seriousness it required. Even if, as per officially released figures, there has been good progress, but in the field, there is a strong feeling that the records so prepared contain large scale mistakes. Few years back, I had a chance meeting with an old colleague, who at that time happened to be posted as Settlement Commissioner. (The officer is still part of the State machinery holding a high position whose name is being withheld). During a few minutes' in- formal chat with him in his office chamber, I was astonished to hear from his own mouth that it was just a routine for him to daily receive scores of applications requesting for rectification of errors in the records prepared in the process of ongoing Settlement. After hearing from a person holding a responsible position, similar information shared by people actually affected, as also Advocates dealing with such cases, and others connected with the same in any manner, the whole process gets overshadowed. Without going into many details in the matter, some important information depicting the state of affairs in connection with the ongoing Settlement operations both in respect of Kashmir as well as Jammu Divisions is summed up as follows.

I. Kashmir Division

A.G. Shahbaz, one of the veteran retired Revenue Officers of high repute from Valley; who joined service as Naib Tehsildar in mid-fifties of the past century, rose to the post of Revenue Secretary besides being inducted into I.A.S.; who boasts of having an humble origin of the agrarian community as well, has shared some serious concerns in connection with the current Settlement records in Kashmir, exclusively dealing with the

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aspects of quality, in a note prepared by him few months back. Shri Shahbaz, reportedly has sent this long note, comprising thirteen pages, to the then Hon'ble Minister for Revenue, Jammu and Kashmir for perusal as well as its examination for the sake of thinking over it considerably; with copies thereof to the Financial Commissioner (Revenue), the Commissioner/Secretary Revenue, the Secretary to Government Law Department, the Commissioner Survey and Land Records and the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir for perusal and appropriate action. For the sake of brevity only few selected excerpts from the said note are reproduced hereunder;

"Para 3: The subject matter of the current Settlement operations in respect of the lands in the State had come under discussion in the Legislature on 19th March 2012 and 2nd April 2012 wherein it had been stated that the Settlement operations in 1729 villages out of 7854 estates stand completed. Reportedly the Hon'ble Members had expressed their dismay over the success rate of Settlement process which works out to 24 %, ... The Hon'ble Members appear to have emphatically shown their feelings in connection with the pace of work but unfortunately with a passing reference about some discrepancies as well as the quality of work."

Para 6: "..... it was hoped that that the current Settlement will provide a better quality of records but regrettably there have been general feeling of numerous discrepancies, omissions, anomalies and short comings in the records. The Hon'ble Revenue Minister previously on the floor of the House had on 19th of March 2012 disclosed that there have been 1613 complaints about the Settlement process in the Kashmir Division. Till March 2012 an unprecedented demand for obtaining the copies of pre-Settlement records from the Settlement Record Room Srinagar had been observed reportedly for the purpose of rectifications of inconsistencies etc. in the current Settlement records in respect of their land carried out in the so called finalised records. Reportedly most of the land holders are not aware of the entries."

Para 7: "Unluckily most of aggrieved persons have even under the ill-advice and deceptive wrongful guidance, been reportedly resorting to an unprecedented method and unique procedure for the correction of discrepancies/anomalies etc. in the 'Record-of-Rights' of the current Settlement at Patwar/Tehsil level through a so called "Fard Bader" which is devoid of legality. Instead of providing at the Tehsil/Patwar level a proper counseling and guidance to the aggrieved persons or in alternative making officially a consolidated reference by them to the competent

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authority (i.e. the Government) in respect of all wrongs detected for their information and appropriate orders at the Government level. But, the un-abetted contribution to the aforementioned unwarranted method of 'Fard Bader' procedure also tantamount to the connivance, as well as the acquiescence for an unjust action through the concerned revenue officials/functionaries."

Para 9: "But the kind of seriousness and the transparency by the competent authority at the level of "Settlement Officer" can prima facie be judged by the fact that the final attestation of the "Record-of-Rights" have in disregard of norms and principles been reduced simply to a formality by attesting/signing of the same by him in his office chamber at Srinagar without making at least its' some percentage of checking on spot or taken the trouble of tallying some percentage of records with the corresponding pre-settlement record entries and thereby at least make some of the Zamindars in the capacity of necessary party aware as well as conversant of the record entries. Norms and propriety as well as principles of justice demand to make the land owners aware of the record (entries in the prospective "Record-of- Rights") by reading out even the slightest entries before its final attestation and its consignment in the Record Room. Timely knowledge to the Zamindars could not only have evoked and elicited the objections at the initial stage with regard to errors, omissions and short falls, if any, but would have provided a reliable and quality records. Regrettably the position does not seem to be such. Being so, majority of the land owners are yet unaware of the recorded entries or in the event of someone becoming aware feels helpless on account of the intricacies and the lengthy process for setting right legally, the inconsistencies. The reason for the errors and discrepancies, prima facie, appears to have been due to the superficial and casual course of action at the officers and supervisory level."

Para 14 (i) (a & b):" A survey number (Khasra no) is an important, basic, primary and a fundamental figure in the system of Revenue Records besides being so during the Settlement operations. Though with a particular scale each survey (Khasra) number reflects or represents the exact position of the spot in respect of a specific field. As per norms and procedure as well as per definition a tract or a stretch of land based on one and same ownership / interest with an alike occupancy is delineated and assigned one survey (Khasra) number and it is supported with its area as well as peripheral dimensions being known in the Revenue parlance as "Karoo-Kan".

Para 14 (I) (C): "But in disregard of the set norms / procedures it is

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regretfully being observed that an old or erstwhile Khasra number as per definition / norms or in view of the spot position qualifying even now for one or similar survey number has / have without any logic, reasoning or justification been shown under various Khasra numbers, which are hypothetical, unreal, ambiguous and unwanted in nature not conforming to the spot position resulting in confusion and chaos not only for the land-owners but even for others. The said multiplicity of hypothetical, un-real and unwanted Kasra numbers in R.O.R. of the current Settlement is not only impairing the quality of this record but is an impediment in building of revised records like Annual Records viz: Jamabandi or subsequent Girdawri registers in pursuance of the Standing Orders 23(B) and 22. ....."

Para 14 (I) (d): "Even cases are not wanting where the old and erstwhile Khasra numbers with different title / ownership have in disregard of the norms and without any rational been clubbed under a same Khasra number during the current Settlement at the cost of the rights and interests of concerned land owners.

Para 14 (I) (e & f): It is very unfortunate that the functionaries of the current Settlement (wing) particularly the officers have not for the sake of guidance, taken even an idea or a clue from the erstwhile records. in ab initio the formation of Khasra no's, irrationally and illegally, and that too of unreal nature have resulted in confusion and the anomalous position in the records as well as affecting its clarity."

Para 14 (II) (a): "As per norms practice and for the sake of clarity besides averting any sort of dispute the peripheral/marginal measurement of each survey (Khasra) number is essential. But without any reason the Khasra numbers on the maps made available to the field agency are lacking such requirement and the maps simply with outline and sketch work is seemingly like a Skelton lacking its flush, nervous and vein system. Inadequacy in the desired requirement of peripheral dimensions of multiplex Khasra numbers..... is prima facie, an implanted lacuna caused due to the uncalled for and half-hearted action of the Settlement organization."

Para 14 (IV) (a): "Instead of spelling out shares amongst various right/shareholders in simple and comprehensive manner have in violation of norms, practice and facts been uniquely indicated in thousands and even in lacs making the entries more unintelligible as well as confusing and complex. In this sort of messy state of occurrence of confusing wrong back up cannot be ruled out. ..... . On the alibi of computerisation making out or the details with regard to shares have

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exclusively been left out to the computer section of the Record Room and totally giving up any sort of manual exercise and some degree of mental work at the lower level. ..... The share which represents the quantum of the rights of a person in the land usually having a sensitive as well as emotional bearing, and as such deserves to be spelt out and articulated in a simple comprehendible form without being complicate or ill-defined in nature but very plain in appearance".

II. Jammu Division

As regards Jammu Division, the position with respect to Settlement operations is not much different. Issues highlighted by Shri Shahbaz in his note referred to in the foregoing sub-paragraphs do exist here as well, may be with minor modifications. But, in any case, the degree of a sense of general dissatisfaction, particularly amongst the prospective beneficiaries - the land holders; so far as quality of the work is concerned, may be almost the same. A reference to a typical example of the case of village Kalu Chak of erstwhile Tehsil Jammu now Tehsil Bahu of District Jammu would enlighten the readers of the prevailing state of affairs, to a great extent. Observations of the then Settlement Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir, contained in his letter dated 09-02-2005 addressed to the Financial Commissioner (Revenue); wherein he had recommended as also sought sanction to the re-measurement and preparation of Record-of-Rights of said village afresh after cancelling the same prepared during the year 1995-96 A.D., are quite revealing. Contents thereof are enough to exhibit the degree of dissatisfaction even at the level of official machinery as also depict the sad state of affairs prevailing in dealing with a very important and sensitive program of the Government. An excerpt from the letter is reproduced as under;

"Time and again, it was brought to the notice of the authorities at the helm of affairs, verbally as well as in writing that the settlement operations are ticklish, complicated and time consuming in nature and as such officers/officials involved need continuity in the office, besides having experience and knowledge of basic revenue work and Urdu language. At present, most of the posts of Naib Tehsildars and GQs (Girdawer Qanungos) who are mainly responsible for making verification/ authentication of records are lying vacant and some of the available officers either do not know Urdu language or are not having good knowledge of revenue/settlement work. It is not expected of them to prepare correct records and as such there will be some more Kalu Chak in future. Moreover, the persons involved in construction of record are subject to dual control which is always a readymade excuse for their

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non-functioning/mal-functioning. The lack of interest in and understanding of the importance of the program, in-difference on the part of authorities added with absence of accountability has not only adversely told upon the progress of settlement operations but has also resulted in the preparation of wrong records which ultimately will add to the number of litigation. In this backdrop, it is recommended either the necessary infrastructure be provided for undertaking the Settlement operations in accordance with law and to the best expectations of the people or to pay (say) goodbye to the program."

Closing the topic, it may be concluded that undoubtedly 'Land Settlement' is an essential as also important component of the working of the Revenue Department, but when taken up for an area or a tract the work definitely demands precision and strict supervision of well-trained and qualified persons. Besides, for the sake of fairness, transparency and justice, as also with a view to rule out chances of errors or omissions in the final records, participatory role of the land holders, needs being strictly enforced, as per set procedure and practices in vogue in the Department in the past.



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APPENDIX-III

Past Financial Commissioners (Revenue), Jammu and Kashmir (From year 1956 to 1990)

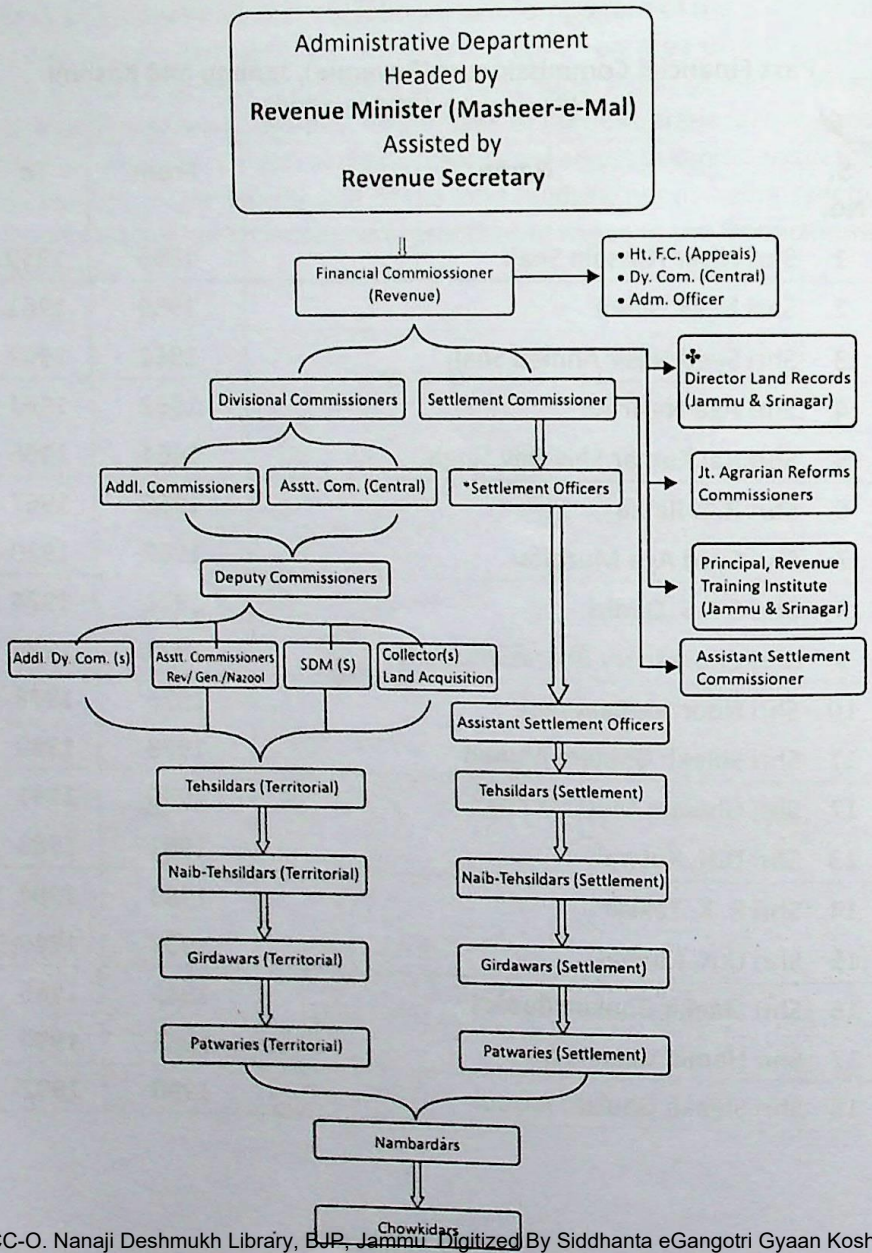
S. No.	Name	From	To
1	Shri Nisar Hussain Shah	1956	1959
2	Shri M.M. Sidiqi	1959	1961
3	Shri Syed Nasir Ahmed Shah	1961	1962
4	Shri Aga Nasir Ali	1962	1964
5	Shri Raj Kumar Shiv Dev Singh	1964	1966
6	Shri R.C. Raina	1966	1967
7	Shri Syed Aga Muzaffar	1967	1970
8	Shri S.A.S. Qadiri	1971	1974
9	Shri Chowdhary Bharat Bhushan	1974	1976
10	Shri Noor Mohammed	1976	1978
11	Shri Shiekh Ghulam Ahmed	1978	1980
12	Shri Ghulam Mustafa Khan	1980	1981
13	Shri D.N. Kotwal	1981	1983
14	Shri R. K. Takkar	1983	1984
15	Shri D.N. Kotwal	1984	1985
16	Shri Shiekh Ghulam Rasool	1985	1986
17	Shri Hamid Ullah Khan	1986	1990
18	Shri Shiekh Ghulam Rasool	1990	1992

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APPENDIX-IV

Organisational Chart



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- In pursuance of Government Order, No: Rev/S/227 of 2013 dated 04-09-2013, the assignments of Director Land Records and Settlement Officer (both Divisional level posts) have been combined. Clubbed functions of maintenance of Land Record and Settlement organization in the areas falling within present UT of Jammu and Kashmir have been re-assigned to seven Survey and Land Record Divisions each headed by a Regional Director Survey and Land Records (ex-officio Settlement Officer).



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MEET THE AUTHOR

Availability :

Subject to pre-appointment on mobile phone, the author is available (free of charge) for consultations on any sort of matters associated with Revenue Department laws, rules, and regulations, to the;

i. JAS and JKAS probationers

ii. Those preparing for Departmental Examination - (Revenue Subjects).

iii. General public with genuine issues pertaining to Revenue Department.

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Virender Kumar Gupta is a retired senior Revenue Officer of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State (now UT), who entered into the State Government service in August 1959 at the lowest rung of the Revenue Department as Patwari. In recognition of meritorious service in the cadres of Patwari, Girdawar, and Naib Tehsildar, of course, after passing the prescribed departmental examinations, he was elevated to the junior scale of KAS (Tehsildar) in the year 1973 and to the senior scale of KAS (Assistant Commissioner-Revenue) in the year 1984.

Besides having served as Tehsildar for around eleven years as also on various senior assignments in Revenue Department including Staff Officer to the Divisional Commissioner Jammu and the Financial Commissioner J & K State for another around ten years, he also held the assignments of Director Land Management JDA, Director Rural Development Department Jammu, and Director Handlooms Development Department J & K State. He retired on superannuation on 31st of January 1999 from General Administration Department in the 'Special Scale of KAS' (Special Secretary). Post-retirement, he served as OSD & Deputy CEO Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (five and a half years); Member and Secretary Committee for Demarcation of Boundaries of Newly Created Districts, Sub-divisions, and Tehsils; Member and Secretary Committee for Examination of Demands for Creation of New Administrative Units (both assignments around three and half years) and lastly the Consultant (Land Management) Central University of Jammu (three years plus).

Earlier he has authored two books, "The Manual of Instructions" and "The J & K Tenancy Act".

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Revenue Department has in the past been the backbone of administration, and the saying is relevant to a large extent even today. This book by Shri Virender Kumar Gupta provides an account of reflections of some iconic former Revenue Officers. Shri Gupta can rightfully claim to belong to a not so big clan of former bureaucrats, who after having served in various capacities in the Revenue Department for a major portion of his service career, has not only a vast knowledge of Revenue laws and rules but a deep insight into their administration and actual implementation. The book will go down well in placing on record, experiences of certain renowned Revenue Officers, before these fade in oblivion and are forgotten by coming generations.

Mushtaq Ahmed Ganai **(IAS)**
Commissioner/Secretary to Government J & K (Retd.)

Eminently readable! The publication is the result of persistent and painstaking efforts of the author, Shri Virender Kumar Gupta, a luminary of the Revenue Department who was among the pioneers of the Consolidation of Holdings Operations in the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir in the sixties. In the part titled 'The Bouquet', the author provides an interesting insight into the working of some of the legends of the Revenue Department. In the 'The Trend Setters' Section, the reader gets to share the invaluable experiences of some of the stalwarts and practitioners of Revenue Laws and administration in the State. The book will be of immense use to the general public, the Revenue Officers and specially the fresh entrants to the Civil Services.

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